My Bio
by Frank Moore

I began my life in art by playing with oil paints in 1963. Since then, my paintings have been exhibited around the U.S.A. and Canada. Most of my paintings of nudes are of strangers who I approached and asked if I could paint them.

This method led me in the early 70's into performance art, experimental theatre, and shamanism. I started doing private, erotic performances, **non-films**.

In Santa Fe, NM I created a performance group which I first moved to NYC, and then to Berkeley, CA. I focused on long, ritualistic pieces. I also did public events and environmental plays with this group.

In 1977 by combining rock, ritual, experimental theatre, and an over-the-edge cabaret style, I developed what I call **tack rock**. I trained several rock singers and advised several S.F. Punk bands such as **X-Ray-Ted**. I also produced several rock concerts.

In 1978, I created the taboo-breaking cabaret, **The Outrageous Beauty Revue**, which quickly became a major landmark in the san francisco new wave's glory days. The **OBR** played at S.F.'S **Mabuhay Gardens** every saturday night for three years, as well as at other clubs. For the **OBR**, I created the band, **The Superheros**, which had an independent performing existence. I became its lead singer. I then sang with **The Quirks**.

In Berkeley in the early 80's, I opened the underground rock club, **The Blind Lemon**. I also started doing 12-48 hour shamanistic performances which created altered realities not bound by the normal limits of time, space and morality. This was also the time that I started making videos such as **Fairytales Can Come True**, **Erotic Play**, and **Out Of Isolation** which have received awards and have been shown all over the world.

I used my bi-monthly series at U.C. Berkeley (1984-1987) to develop pieces for clubs, galleries and other colleges. In 1985 I received a **N.E.A. Fellowship** for my work.I have done live performances throughout the United States and Canada. I have lectured on performance and shamanism at such universities as N.Y.U., Stanford, U.C.L.A., San francisco Art Institute, and the School of the Chicago Art Institute. I have also been published extensively on these subjects, including my book, **Cherotic Magic**. I am also the editor of the zine, **The Cherotic (r)Evolutionary**.

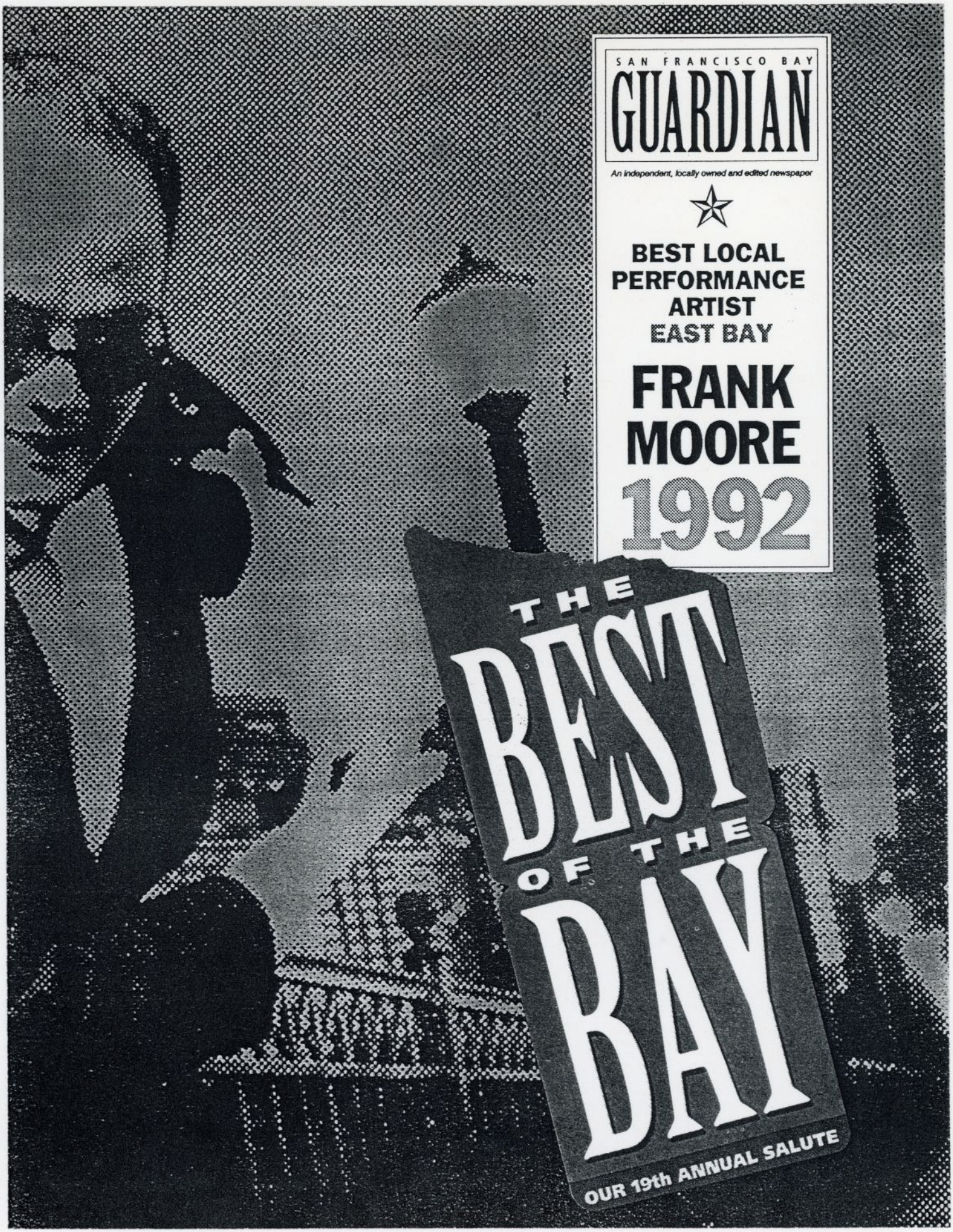
In 1989, I created another cabaret show, **The Outrageous Horror Show**. I have taken this show across the country to clubs such as **C.B.G.B.'S** in NYC, **Al's bar** in L.A., And **Lower Links** in Chicago.

But I have one question. Why in 1991 Sen. Jesse Helms targeted me as one of five "obscene" artists whom he had the **G.A.O.** Investigate?

THE BEST OF SAN FRANCISCO AND THE BAY AREA

SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN

Best East Bay Performance Artist 1992
Frank Moore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BEST LOCAL PERFORMANCE ARTIST EAST BAY
FRANK MOORE
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EAST SIDE STORY

Artist on a Roll

By Chiori Santiago

Photograph by Tom Duncan

Frank Moore

Hairy and howling, an earthbound Chewbacca on wheels, Frank Moore is an unlikely sex symbol. But that's what he calls himself—and I suspect that, if he could get it to stay there, he'd make that statement with tongue firmly in cheek.

If you hang around Berkeley, particularly in that district known to natives as "The Ave," you've seen Moore. Maybe you've seen him at Cafe Roma, looking like a large, misplaced insect, an antenna-like orange pointer strapped to his head. This is, in a manner of speaking, his tongue. Born with cerebral palsy, Moore's muscles—except those in his neck—are slight and uncontrollable; his body lurches in spasms of excitement when he's eager to (literally) make a point. He uses the pointer to carry on conversations, indicating words and letters on a worn wooden board attached to the arms of his motorized wheelchair. He once had a computer board with which to communicate, but likes the homemade ouija-type plank better. "This is slower, more personal," he explains.

Getting personal takes up a lot of Moore's time, and is the purpose of a bi-monthly performance series he's done for the past two years under the sponsorship of ASUC Studio at the University of California. If you don't catch him at a Telegraph Avenue cafe, walk down the block to Dwinelle Hall on campus, where he attempts to goose people's minds every other Thursday evening in Room 125. This year's series, "Over the Edge," is billed as "live art for daring people who like to be taken just outside the normal reality."

"Because of my handicap, people were always looking at me," Moore says. "So why not like it? I'm lucky to be an exhibitionist in this body. I like to be around people, but not in a polite social way. I like to get down, talk about what you really feel, and play. The personal relationship I have with my actors is what pulls people into the soft mood.... I use the actors like a bridge for the audience to follow."

Most of Moore's actors are close friends, family, and members of the audience who become part of the entertainment before they know what hits them. Some performances features "exposed spastic body parts." Others are "intensely silly, sometimes softly sensual, sometimes loudly tacky." The audience may end up playing in a tent, watching people being wrapped in ribbons, toilet paper, and cellophane, or participating in a game of spastic Follow-the-Leader. As Moore says, "they usually don't know what they're getting into," and much of the time, neither does he.

Armed with a friend, I attended a recent performance, somewhat wary of what this grunting guy in a wheelchair would deliver. Inside the narrow classroom, we made up a third of the audience. The evening began with Moore's eighteen-minute video, "Fairytales Can Come True." In it, Moore is being fed by a motherly woman who dispenses advice along with the mashed food that dribbles abundantly down his beard. "Your problem, Frank," she says, "is that you expect a homecoming queen. Someday some nice girl will come along and look past your body. Just sublimate, Frank, forget about the girls for right now."

But he can't, and while the Everly Brothers croon, "dream, dream, dree-em," Moore does just that: a nude blonde drags him, flopping like a fish, from his wheelchair, flings him on a bed, wipes away the excess spittle, and...

At this point, Moore's fairy godfather comes on the scene to whip him into shape. "Look at you!" he yells. "You're a bag of beans! You want to turn from frog to prince, go for it! Shave off your beard and cut off that goddamn hair." Moore follows this advice and the transformation is surprising—"Look at you, Robert Redford and Mick Jagger, a horrible clone," says the fairy godfather with delight. "Making love to spastics could be the next fad. Now you've got to get rid of those drab old attitudes." The rest of the tale is classic Beauty and the Beast stuff, but where it's OK to laugh at the Beast. Moore gets the girl, winning her away from her cute but loutish boyfriend by sheer personality, and as Frank Sinatra was crooning the title tune over the credits, Moore, dressed in brightly colored legwarmers and hand-printed fabrics, wheeled into the room.

He drove up to each person in the audience—no mean feat in a small room filled with those wiry chair/desks—and, gritting his teeth with the exertion of letter-by-letter speech, asked us what we wanted out of a performance. Moore's pretty attendant and wife of nine years, Linda Mac, helped those who need translation. "I want be entertained," was my friend's answer. "They put down entertainment in art school," replied Moore, who received a Masters of Fine Arts degree in performance and video from the San Francisco Art Institute last year. "They say it's not art. So in the back room it will be intense and tear you apart. But in this room you will be entertained. This room may not be safe, but it is safer than the back room. You can move between the two." He pointed toward a sheet ominously strung across the back portion of the room. No one made a move to investigate.

As Moore disappeared behind the sheet, Linda Mac asked another "wheelie" in the audience, Neil (who turned out to be a friend of Moore's), if he would like to perform, suggesting he show people "how to act like a spaz." There was one volunteer, a fellow named Dean. It was kind of like one of those United Way promotional films in which kindly nurses drag disabled veterans through rehabilitation exercises in an attempt to make them walk like "normal" people, only when the tables were turned, I must say we "walkies" didn't measure up. Neil was in great shape. Lurching from his wheelchair, he hopped around on the toes of one leg, the other extended at a perfect right angle. There was no way Dean could match this, but he tried valiantly. "You have to relax," Neil explained.

Some performances feature "exposed spastic body parts." Others are "intensely silly." As Frank Moore says, "the audience usually doesn't know what they're getting into," and much of the time, neither does he.

A group of janitors gathered outside the door, nudging each other and staring at the new video rolling by on the monitor—a languid, repeated stop-action tape of a woman taking a shower. It is a simple, hypnotic image; it is as if Moore, the director, abandoning the fish-out-of-water helplessness of the first video, has become one, gliding easily and observing everything in the fish bowl world around him.

"I wanna see what's behind that curtain," said one janitor, Stan. "It's a little crazy, I guess," he continued, when I asked him about the series. "It's weird. I guess it's OK if that's what you like; we let it distract us. Every time it's different. Sometimes Frank sings and him and Linda pretend they're Sonny and Cher. Sometimes you see naked bodies and everything. They paint their bodies. One time they brought clothes and had people dressing up, guys wearing dresses and everything.... See, like that."

A slide projector threw scenes from Moore's past performances on the stretched sheet: "The Outrageous Beauty Revue," a risque spoof of beauty pageants which began as a one-night stand at the Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco and ran for three years; the Sonny and Cher act; and enough painted faces and vivid costumes to fill a Mardi Gras parade.

There was no noise or movement from behind the curtain. The suspense was becoming unbearable. It was time to go behind the white sheet.

On the other side, it turned out, was a foam mattress on the floor, some balls of ribbon, and Frank and Dean engrossed in slow conversation. That's all. One by one, other people ventured behind the sheet. We sat on the mattress and talked. It was cozy, even stuffy. I remembered doing this as a kid, when my brothers and I would drape sheets over the dining room table and camp out there, telling stories and dirty jokes until we fell asleep. Stan the janitor man, lured into the tent by visions of unclothed bodies, yawned and looked at his watch. "Guess I better go check my wax," he said.

Later, I asked Moore what he wants his performances to accomplish for the audience. "I want them to get back to the kid, to get out of isolation and fear," he explained. "The janitors were amazing. They proved it works. When we started the series, they would peek in and be sleazy, but now they're playful, as if they're not affected by the nudity." Perhaps the janitors consider Moore's art a refreshing interlude in an otherwise boring routine, but not everyone takes kindly to the sexual references in his work. Moore says the "eroplay" in his performances stems from a childlike curiosity and sensuality that is actually nonsexual.

"People don't want to play because they think it has to lead to sex—there is not even a word for it," he explained. "They think I must be dishonest when I say [the performances] are not sexual. It would be easier and safer for me if I did include sex because then [the audience] would have some place to put it in their minds. That's why the work cannot be glamorous, because then they cannot be sucked up in the glamor and blame that for what they feel. It's better to make the performances silly and tacky. I usually make the first part slow and boring so that the people who don't understand it will leave."

His quest for the tacky, however, makes it difficult for Moore to find actors for his performances. During our interview, he was seeking someone for his upcoming "Rock and Wrap" show in which Moore and an actress, painted with primitive designs, are wrapped by the audience in toilet paper and cellophane to an accompaniment of poetry and Indian music. According to Moore, "It's a magic gesture, calming and peaceful." His partner last year, the assistant director of UC's Women's Center, who "understood what I was doing," had left to get married, and he couldn't find a replacement. "If I made [the pieces] serious, performers would do it because it's art," he said. "Artists should play, but they think they should suffer." At the same time, he seemed confident that someone from the audience could be persuaded to take the part. "People join in my performances because they don't have a place to do these things in normal life."

When I left Moore, both my spelling and patience had improved tremendously, and I resolved to quit complaining about my limitations and get on with it. In his agonizingly slow, thought-by thought way, Frank Moore succeeds in pulling us into his world. The performances are as frantically disorganized as an amateur circus. Yet, like a messy but energetic painting, his is art you like in spite of itself. And whatever you think of Frank Moore's art, for a guy to whom ordinary conversation is exhausting, he turns in one helluva performance.

HIGH PERFORMANCE

#21 THE ORIGINAL PERFORMANCE ART MAGAZINE $5

THIS ISSUE

Frank Moore, Johanna Went, Cheri Gaulke
Plasmatics, Bill Harding, Pat Oleszko
Performance in China, England, Holland
News, Reviews, Interviews, Artist Pages

EROTIC PLAY

THE ART OF SPASTIC FRANK MOORE

By LEWIS MacADAMS

HOWLING AND MOANING, Frank Moore is dragging an orange plastic pointer across a letter-covered wooden palette fastened to the arms of his motorized wheelchair using the muscles of his *neck*. His neck muscles, in fact, seem to be the only muscles this 38-year-old spastic performance artist has any control of. The orange pointer, attached at one end to a circa-60's era hand-tooled leather headband, spells out the words he wants to say, touching letter after letter, or pointing to a handful of simple words like "Yes, no, he, she, it," etc. that border the board's alphabet. It is exhausting to talk to this man and he knows it. The effort and concentration it takes him to spell out the answer to a simple question seems about equivalent to you or I pushing a small car around the block with our necks. At Frank Moore's side is a tall, slender, attractive woman who calls herself Linda Mac. She is Moore's wife, or one of them. They have been together for eight years, and she is paid by the state to be his attendant. Moore is 99% physically disabled, a victim of cerebral palsy and brain damage, and none of the sounds he can make are words. Linda understands a lot of what he is trying to say and often finishes the sentences he is spelling out, to his obvious approval and a visitor's palpable relief.

Moore in performance with wife, Linda Mac

Sitting in a damp garage-studio behind a stucco duplex west of Berkeley High School, a house Frank and Linda share with three other adult members of his family and one child, Frank is emitting a keening sound which somehow registers as laughter, a triumphant, affecting horse-laugh of pleasure at the credits rolling down a video screen. It's the opening scene from "Fairy Tales Can Come True," a super-8 "rock-comedy" Moore wrote, directed and starred in in 1980.

Onscreen Frank Sinatra is singing the title as Moore wheels himself around Berkeley's Sproul Plaza, drooling into his matted beard and trying to look down co-ed's blouses and up their skirts. It's hopeless, though. In his Vietnam-era fatigues, Frank reads like a loser. Some girls just panic when Frank rolls up, and take off running. Others mutter embarrassed apologies. Finally, a fat, seedy-looking Australian "fairy godfather" tells Frank exactly where it's at: "Look at yew," the Aussie crows, "Yew oughta be ashamed. Clean up your act! If you'd shave that bloody beard and get some new clothes you could look like Mick Jagger! Then you'll find yourself a nice girl who'll appreciate you and look past your body."

So Frank does follow his fairy godfather's advice; and sure enough, he does look like a very, very spazzed Mick Jagger. The tempo of the film changes. Roy Orbison croons "Pretty Woman" as, on the screen, the new Frank meets a lithe beauty who soon confides in Frank that her beach boy boyfriend is a heartless oaf. Soon Frank and the girl are having lunch. Next, we see them naked together, rolling around on a waterbed. The woman seems to enfold Frank's pale twisted body in her arms as they touch and play. There are close-ups of the woman's shoulder, her easy smile, oddly-angled shots of her thighs and of Frank's enormous tongue. It is unaccountably sexy and/or sensual to the *max*, a kind of grown-up light-hearted goof on *Beauty and the Beast* with a moral overtone. One imagines this a kind of spiritual training film at quadriplegic consciousness-raising sessions.

A little embarrassed, I tell Moore all this; and he is off and roaring again, twisting his body half out of his chair. "It *is* used that way," he writes out with his pointer. In his orange bicycle helmet, glittering rainbow-colored legwarmers, soft blue shoes, red pants, purple quilted down vest and lavender, polka-dotted shirt over red turtle-neck over neck-brace and red beard he looks as unlike a victim as Linda—in her lilac pants, red shoes, violet sweater and multi-colored scarves—looks like a nurse. Linda gets up and puts another videocassette into the machine.

It's Frank's new tape-in-progress, a video he's been working on for less than a year, called "Erotic Play." To the music of "Memo From Turner," the Rolling Stones' theme song from the movie "Performance," a series of men and women, straight and hip, old and young (there are even a pair of very young girls—children, Linda explains, of family friends), slowly, shyly, undress. In the foreground is a box of clothes—campy cigarette holders, mini-dresses, Spanish shawls etc.—that look like residue from a bankrupt free store. The

Photo: Ken Jennings

"I am an exhibitionist. I like to have people look at me."

"subjects" of the tape talk about themselves, their problems, their thoughts—whatever is going through their heads—as they put on the clothes. It is interesting and sexy to see a mini-dress worn by in succession a seven-year-old girl, a handsome man and a rather beautiful female dwarf. Some of the people are shy and some are brazen. Physically, they range from polio victims to goddesses. But Moore has an extraordinary eye for beauty in all its many guises; and every person that passes before the camera is, in his or her own way, beautiful. And because the people are awkward and natural and curiously sincere, the tape is, well, quite erotic.

Proudly, Frank spells out on his board his technique for recruiting his stars. He rolls around Sproul Plaza at UC Berkeley, his "people supermarket" with a neatly typed note taped to his wheelchair: "I would like to shoot you for my master's in performance/video at the San Francisco Art Institute," it reads. "I am asking people who I find attractive—although maybe not in Hollywood's concept of attractiveness, beauty, sexiness. I and my wife Linda shoot these people almost like paintings in different poses, different clothes, sometimes nude . . ." And so forth. When Moore sees somebody he wants to use he rolls up to the person in his chair and presents his offer. Interested people are asked to write down their names and phone numbers and Linda calls them up. According to Linda, if someone agrees to come over to their house, they've already decided to do a shoot. Moore yowls and spells it out with his pointer, "Most people get undressed even if they say they won't!"

Photos: f-Stop Fitzgerald

Moore's eyes are his most expressive organ, and looking into them is like looking through the grate of a blazing wood stove. I think of Henry Kissinger's oft-quoted remark that power is the greatest aphrodisiac of them all. Suddenly, Moore seems far less an artist than a mind-fucker and a power-fiend.

Is making these tapes a turn-on for you?

"That's tricky," he slowly spells, as Linda watches attentively, "because turn-on is such a loaded word."

I mean, do you get off by directing, by telling other people what to do?

"No, I direct mostly by laughing. My main direction is just to tell them to have fun."

Do you like to be in control?

"Yes, I like to be in control, but that is not the same thing as having power."

Do you consider yourself a voyeur?

Moore snorts, sighs impatiently and twists toward his wife who gets up and goes back inside.

"Voyeur is the opposite of what I do," Moore writes. "I like to get involved."

Do you consider yourself stronger than most people?

"Stronger than they think they are."

Linda came back to the garage with a print-out of "Erotic Performance," an in-process autobiography he's been working on at the home computer. "I have always been lusty," he announces at the beginning. "Lusty is love of living . . . love of life."

His life has always been extraordinary. He was living in Morocco when he was eight, he says in the book. And so overcome was he by the misery and poverty of the people shitting in the fields across the road and eating out of his family's garbage cans that he decided to do something for them—translate the Bible into Arabic. His mother was the only person Moore could communicate with at the time, and when Moore told her his plan she laughed. Moore was so angry that when she left the room he slid out of his wheelchair and rolled out the screen door and down the steps. He got to the gate before she caught him. It was, he writes, his "first performance piece."

From very early in his life he dreamed of being a performer. From eight to thirteen he went into an "isolation period." He stayed in bed, reading, thinking, listening to the people in his house, pretending that he was the lead singer of a rock and roll band called Blue Unicorn. One day a little boy came up to him and asked him if he was a monster. Frank roared like a monster. "I was lucky," he writes. "I am an exhibitionist. I *like* to have people look at me."

He loved to read pornography, so he joined the Grove Press Book Club. The French Surrealist poetry that came sandwiched in between *The Story of O* and Frank Harris' biography came as a revelation. He began to dream of becoming some kind of artist.

He went to college in San Bernardino in the late 60's. Improbably, he got the school to give him permission to put on an all-nude play. "I was overfocused on sex at the time," he recalls. "But I wasn't really into sex yet in my art. I just wanted to see nude bodies

"I wanted to see people nude. And touch them. And touch them."

on stage and do things like paint them with baby food."

Unfortunately nobody wanted to be in his piece. "I learned it can be hard to get people for weird things."

Depressed, Moore dropped out of school and hit the road. He took LSD and hitchhiked to Santa Fe, then on to Boston where he joined a 350-person commune called The Brotherhood of the Spirit. He still had had no sex.

"Then the leader of the commune made a public announcement that I needed sex. Overnight, I had a few sexual experiences. It made him decide to stop thinking he was ugly,". . . start thinking I was beautiful . . . start acting the part. . . ."

Moore met a woman and they married and left the commune for Albuquerque. He became interested in a meditation system called Silva Mind Control. "When I thought I was ugly, nothing happened. So I decided to pretend I really believed I was beautiful. And because I managed to pretend 100%, I forgot it was just something I was pretending." Another woman came into the household. Soon, "we three admitted we were married." At that time he did his first erotic film: himself rolling naked down a hill with an "almost nude girl."

"I wanted to see people nude," he writes. "And touch them. And touch them. And create an intensity between us." He began to ask people to act out "intense erotic scenes" with him in front on a camera. Sometimes there was film in the camera, sometimes there was not; but people would tell Moore later that acting out the scenes with him helped their other relationships. People began to pay him for his time.

I asked him to explain the difference in his mind between eros and sex.

"I think of erotic as like play for kids. Erotic is like dancing, singing, judo, acting. It is natural, but we have forgotten how. In sexual relationships, eroticism is part of that relationship. But it is possible to enjoy erotic relations without sex. I just don't know what to call it. We don't even have a slot in our lives for relating physically without sex."

Are you saying eros is basically for children?

"It's child-like, not childish."

If eros is child-like, what is adult?

"It's a child-like quality in people, particularly in relating physically."

Why don't you call what you do therapy?

"I have used counseling, but it got in the way of what I wanted to do. That's why I turned to performance. When you counsel, you have to deal with peoples' problems instead of focusing on fun."

Do you see what you're doing as entertainment?

"I hope so. I'm not down on entertainment."

After New Mexico, Moore and his family moved on to New York where they started The Theatre of Human Melting. The Theatre did 48-hour "processes." "We did chanting, moving in slow motion, dressing and undressing a lot." The actors would write out what they wanted to happen and Moore would direct it. The script, he says, was just a prop. "The real course of action is shaped by the performer, so the flow of the piece will go forward and deeper."

The Theatre of Human Melting broke up, and Moore and his family moved back to Berkeley. One day he rolled into a travel agency and he met Linda. "When she leaned over the counter I looked down her blouse and asked her to have lunch with me." They were soon married, too.

The interview stopped for a minute as a glowing red-headed little boy came into the garage looking for his bike.

Is that yours and Linda's kid?

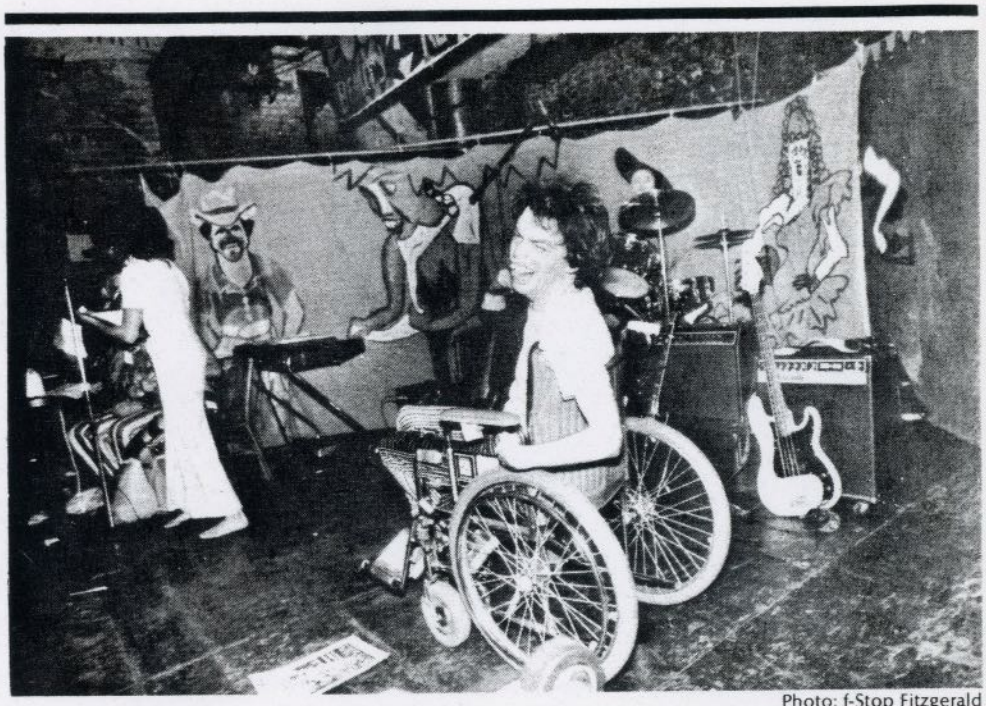


Photo: f-Stop Fitzgerald

Moore spells out "He has five parents instead of two."

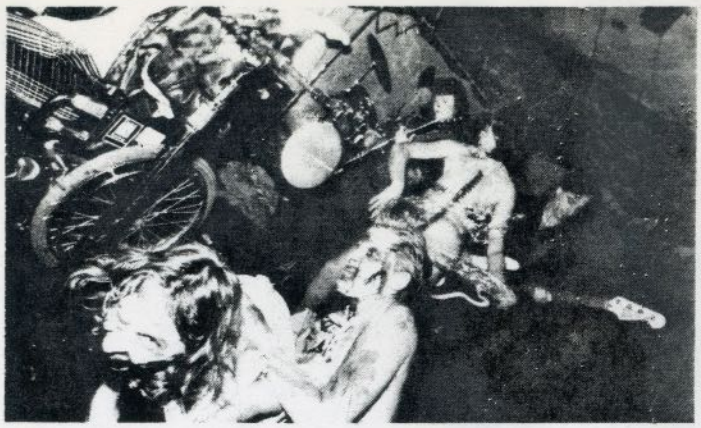
But he's your kid?

"Koala is my son."

Moore and his family started doing events like costume parades and concerts. They opened a storefront and taught workshops and more 48-hour processes. They went to shopping centers and handed out questionaires with questions like, "If it was OK to show your breasts in public, how would you show them?" All of this led them to San Francisco's North Beach and a former Filipino nightclub turned punk-rock landmark called the Mabuhay Gardens.

Nursed along by the Mabuhay's inspired promoter, a sort of Diaghilev of sleaze named Dirk Dirksen, what Moore began to call his Outrageous Beauty Review opened the show at the Fab Mab every Saturday night for three years. Billing themselves as "the dirty foam on the new wave," Moore and his players amused, inspired, infuriated or bored thousands of mostly bewildered people with their strange theatrical collage. At times the Outrageous Beauty Review was pathetic, a sick joke. At times it was hilarious. At all times it was sexy, because the performers wanted to be, and in the

A cthonic figure, fiery eyes, a laugh like a wild pig



main they were ordinary people whom Frank Moore had somehow given permission.

A typical night at the Outrageous Beauty Review would go like this: while outraged and disbelieving punkers rained down hors d'oeuvre popcorn (and the occasional beer bottle) on the performers, a female Elvis impersonator would do her number, followed by a guy in his underpants who hurled himself first into a bowl of warm noodles, then into a vat of chocolate pudding. After that, a trio of half-naked white girls writhed out an imitation of the Supremes accompanied by an incompetent rock and roll quartet kachunking out chords. For the grand finale, Moore himself was wheeled out between two female attendants, all clad in sort-of uniforms of the Green Berets. Boxes of dry ice were opened and lit by pulsating strobes as the attendants marched in place, singing "The Ballad of the Green Berets" accompanied by Frank Moore's howls. As the cacophony rose to a crescendo the performers began wrestling each other to the ground, tearing off each other's underclothes. You don't see stuff like that every day.

After he finished with the Outrageous Beauty, Moore's attention turned to the film "Fairy Tales Can Come True" and the erotic video.

Now he admits he is already impatient with video. "I'm tired of the video con," he admits. "I don't want people just to watch." Always in him there is the sense of trying to push back limits. "Whenever a new limit is crossed there is a release, which leads to comfortableness." The goal, he says over and over in his in-process bio is "the willingness to get involved with other people, to call the magic state from the people, to draw the audience into a state of unity."

Moore turns to his Atari and calls up a video game. He is instantly, completely absorbed. In the living room, two women members of the family are deeply into their knitting machines. One is a designer, the other a manufacturer of knits and sportswear. It feels good in the house, a happy, productive scene.

I interrupt Moore to ask him one more question, what's his next move?

"So far," he writes out, "all my fantasies have come true. I've never really known what comes next, but teaching feels like something I have to do."

He must have registered my surprise at his answer because he continues to spell out words: "If Chris Burden can teach, so can I."

It is time to go. The women stop work for a minute to pick Frank up, and carry him over to his recliner. Away from his board, he is out of word contact. I leave the house exhausted and shaken. "Performance art," Moore wrote in his print-out autobio, "has no passive audience and is done in the real world."

Most of us are stars in our own little plays, and few of us any less so than Frank Moore. But almost none of us have had to work with materials as intractable as Frank Moore's. His ability to function as an artist at all is awesome. But his talent as an erotic creator is nearly inexplicable. But I bet somewhere, in some half-buried myth on Crete or Cyprus, there is a figure like Moore. A cthonic figure, all matted earth and fiery eyes, a laugh like a wild pig. Glee. Lust. Crippled free of any daily endeavors. Powerful as Spring and choking on vines. An ancient modern, handed down from urge to urge. "I don't *ever*," I thought to myself walking back to my car, "want to ever hear *any*one—male or female—complain again that they can't get laid." Oddly comforted by the thought, I clicked on my engine, rolled back the roof to catch the late afternoon sunshine, and headed back across the bridge.

Photos: f-Stop Fitzgerald

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EROTIC PLAY

THE ART OF SPASTIC FRANK MOORE

By LEWIS MacADAMS

HOWLING AND MOANING, Frank Moore is dragging an orange plastic pointer across a letter-covered wooden palette fastened to the arms of his motorized wheelchair using the muscles of his *neck*. His neck muscles, in fact, seem to be the only muscles this 38-year-old spastic performance artist has any control of. The orange pointer, attached at one end to a circa-60's era hand-tooled leather headband, spells out the words he wants to say, touching letter after letter, or pointing to a handful of simple words like "Yes, no, he, she, it," etc. that border the board's alphabet. It is exhausting to talk to this man and he knows it. The effort and concentration it takes him to spell out the answer to a simple question seems about equivalent to you or I pushing a small car around the block with our necks. At Frank Moore's side is a tall, slender, attractive woman who calls herself Linda Mac. She is Moore's wife, or one of them. They have been together for eight years, and she is paid by the state to be his attendant. Moore is 99% physically disabled, a victim of cerebral palsy and brain damage, and none of the sounds he can make are words. Linda understands a lot of what he is trying to say and often finishes the sentences he is spelling out, to his obvious approval and a visitor's palpable relief.

Moore in performance with wife, Linda Mac

Sitting in a damp garage-studio behind a stucco duplex west of Berkeley High School, a house Frank and Linda share with three other adult members of his family and one child, Frank is emitting a keening sound which somehow registers as laughter, a triumphant, affecting horse-laugh of pleasure at the credits rolling down a video screen. It's the opening scene from "Fairy Tales Can Come True," a super-8 "rock-comedy" Moore wrote, directed and starred in in 1980.

Onscreen Frank Sinatra is singing the title as Moore wheels himself around Berkeley's Sproul Plaza, drooling into his matted beard and trying to look down co-ed's blouses and up their skirts. It's hopeless, though. In his Vietnam-era fatigues, Frank reads like a loser. Some girls just panic when Frank rolls up, and take off running. Others mutter embarrassed apologies. Finally, a fat, seedy-looking Australian "fairy godfather" tells Frank exactly where it's at: "Look at yew," the Aussie crows, "Yew oughta be ashamed. Clean up your act! If you'd shave that bloody beard and get some new clothes you could look like Mick Jagger! Then you'll find yourself a nice girl who'll appreciate you and look past your body."

So Frank does follow his fairy godfather's advice; and sure enough, he does look like a very, very spazzed Mick Jagger. The tempo of the film changes. Roy Orbison croons "Pretty Woman" as, on the screen, the new Frank meets a lithe beauty who soon confides in Frank that her beach boy boyfriend is a heartless oaf. Soon Frank and the girl are having lunch. Next, we see them naked together, rolling around on a waterbed. The woman seems to enfold Frank's pale twisted body in her arms as they touch and play. There are close-ups of the woman's shoulder, her easy smile, oddly-angled shots of her thighs and of Frank's enormous tongue. It is unaccountably sexy and/or sensual to the *max*, a kind of grown-up light-hearted goof on *Beauty and the Beast* with a moral overtone. One imagines this a kind of spiritual training film at quadriplegic consciousness-raising sessions.

A little embarrassed, I tell Moore all this; and he is off and roaring again, twisting his body half out of his chair. "It *is* used that way," he writes out with his pointer. In his orange bicycle helmet, glittering rainbow-colored legwarmers, soft blue shoes, red pants, purple quilted down vest and lavender, polka-dotted shirt over red turtle-neck over neck-brace and red beard he looks as unlike a victim as Linda—in her lilac pants, red shoes, violet sweater and multi-colored scarves—looks like a nurse. Linda gets up and puts another videocassette into the machine.

It's Frank's new tape-in-progress, a video he's been working on for less than a year, called "Erotic Play." To the music of "Memo From Turner," the Rolling Stones' theme song from the movie "Performance," a series of men and women, straight and hip, old and young (there are even a pair of very young girls—children, Linda explains, of family friends), slowly, shyly, undress. In the foreground is a box of clothes—campy cigarette holders, mini-dresses, Spanish shawls etc.—that look like residue from a bankrupt free store. The

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Photo: Ken Jennings

"I am an exhibitionist. I like to have people look at me."

"subjects" of the tape talk about themselves, their problems, their thoughts—whatever is going through their heads—as they put on the clothes. It is interesting and sexy to see a mini-dress worn by in succession a seven-year-old girl, a handsome man and a rather beautiful female dwarf. Some of the people are shy and some are brazen. Physically, they range from polio victims to goddesses. But Moore has an extraordinary eye for beauty in all its many guises; and every person that passes before the camera is, in his or her own way, beautiful. And because the people are awkward and natural and curiously sincere, the tape is, well, quite erotic.

Proudly, Frank spells out on his board his technique for recruiting his stars. He rolls around Sproul Plaza at UC Berkeley, his "people supermarket" with a neatly typed note taped to his wheelchair: "I would like to shoot you for my master's in performance/video at the San Francisco Art Institute," it reads. "I am asking people who I find attractive—although maybe not in Hollywood's concept of attractiveness, beauty, sexiness. I and my wife Linda shoot these people almost like paintings in different poses, different clothes, sometimes nude . . ." And so forth. When Moore sees somebody he wants to use he rolls up to the person in his chair and presents his offer. Interested people are asked to write down their names and phone numbers and Linda calls them up. According to Linda, if someone agrees to come over to their house, they've already decided to do a shoot. Moore yowls and spells it out with his pointer, "Most people get undressed even if they say they won't!"

Photos: f-Stop Fitzgerald

Moore's eyes are his most expressive organ, and looking into them is like looking through the grate of a blazing wood stove. I think of Henry Kissinger's oft-quoted remark that power is the greatest aphrodisiac of them all. Suddenly, Moore seems far less an artist than a mind-fucker and a power-fiend.

Is making these tapes a turn-on for you?

"That's tricky," he slowly spells, as Linda watches attentively, "because turn-on is such a loaded word."

I mean, do you get off by directing, by telling other people what to do?

"No, I direct mostly by laughing. My main direction is just to tell them to have fun."

Do you like to be in control?

"Yes, I like to be in control, but that is not the same thing as having power."

Do you consider yourself a voyeur?

Moore snorts, sighs impatiently and twists toward his wife who gets up and goes back inside.

"Voyeur is the opposite of what I do," Moore writes. "I like to get involved."

Do you consider yourself stronger than most people?

"Stronger than they think they are."

Linda came back to the garage with a print-out of "Erotic Performance," an in-process autobiography he's been working on at the home computer. "I have always been lusty," he announces at the beginning. "Lusty is love of living . . . love of life."

His life has always been extraordinary. He was living in Morocco when he was eight, he says in the book. And so overcome was he by the misery and poverty of the people shitting in the fields across the road and eating out of his family's garbage cans that he decided to do something for them—translate the Bible into Arabic. His mother was the only person Moore could communicate with at the time, and when Moore told her his plan she laughed. Moore was so angry that when she left the room he slid out of his wheelchair and rolled out the screen door and down the steps. He got to the gate before she caught him. It was, he writes, his "first performance piece."

From very early in his life he dreamed of being a performer. From eight to thirteen he went into an "isolation period." He stayed in bed, reading, thinking, listening to the people in his house, pretending that he was the lead singer of a rock and roll band called Blue Unicorn. One day a little boy came up to him and asked him if he was a monster. Frank roared like a monster. "I was lucky," he writes. "I am an exhibitionist. I *like* to have people look at me."

He loved to read pornography, so he joined the Grove Press Book Club. The French Surrealist poetry that came sandwiched in between *The Story of O* and Frank Harris' biography came as a revelation. He began to dream of becoming some kind of artist.

He went to college in San Bernardino in the late 60's. Improbably, he got the school to give him permission to put on an all-nude play. "I was overfocused on sex at the time," he recalls. "But I wasn't really into sex yet in my art. I just wanted to see nude bodies

"I wanted to see people nude. And touch them. And touch them."

on stage and do things like paint them with baby food."

Unfortunately nobody wanted to be in his piece. "I learned it can be hard to get people for weird things."

Depressed, Moore dropped out of school and hit the road. He took LSD and hitchhiked to Santa Fe, then on to Boston where he joined a 350-person commune called The Brotherhood of the Spirit. He still had had no sex.

"Then the leader of the commune made a public announcement that I needed sex. Overnight, I had a few sexual experiences. It made him decide to stop thinking he was ugly,". . . start thinking I was beautiful . . . start acting the part. . . ."

Moore met a woman and they married and left the commune for Albuquerque. He became interested in a meditation system called Silva Mind Control. "When I thought I was ugly, nothing happened. So I decided to pretend I really believed I was beautiful. And because I managed to pretend 100%, I forgot it was just something I was pretending." Another woman came into the household. Soon, "we three admitted we were married." At that time he did his first erotic film: himself rolling naked down a hill with an "almost nude girl."

"I wanted to see people nude," he writes. "And touch them. And touch them. And create an intensity between us." He began to ask people to act out "intense erotic scenes" with him in front on a camera. Sometimes there was film in the camera, sometimes there was not; but people would tell Moore later that acting out the scenes with him helped their other relationships. People began to pay him for his time.

I asked him to explain the difference in his mind between eros and sex.

"I think of erotic as like play for kids. Erotic is like dancing, singing, judo, acting. It is natural, but we have forgotten how. In sexual relationships, eroticism is part of that relationship. But it is possible to enjoy erotic relations without sex. I just don't know what to call it. We don't even have a slot in our lives for relating physically without sex."

Are you saying eros is basically for children?

"It's child-like, not childish."

If eros is child-like, what is adult?

"It's a child-like quality in people, particularly in relating physically."

Why don't you call what you do therapy?

"I have used counseling, but it got in the way of what I wanted to do. That's why I turned to performance. When you counsel, you have to deal with peoples' problems instead of focusing on fun."

Do you see what you're doing as entertainment?

"I hope so. I'm not down on entertainment."

After New Mexico, Moore and his family moved on to New York where they started The Theatre of Human Melting. The Theatre did 48-hour "processes." "We did chanting, moving in slow motion, dressing and undressing a lot." The actors would write out what they wanted to happen and Moore would direct it. The script, he says, was just a prop. "The real course of action is shaped by the performer, so the flow of the piece will go forward and deeper."

The Theatre of Human Melting broke up, and Moore and his family moved back to Berkeley. One day he rolled into a travel agency and he met Linda. "When she leaned over the counter I looked down her blouse and asked her to have lunch with me." They were soon married, too.

The interview stopped for a minute as a glowing red-headed little boy came into the garage looking for his bike.

Is that yours and Linda's kid?

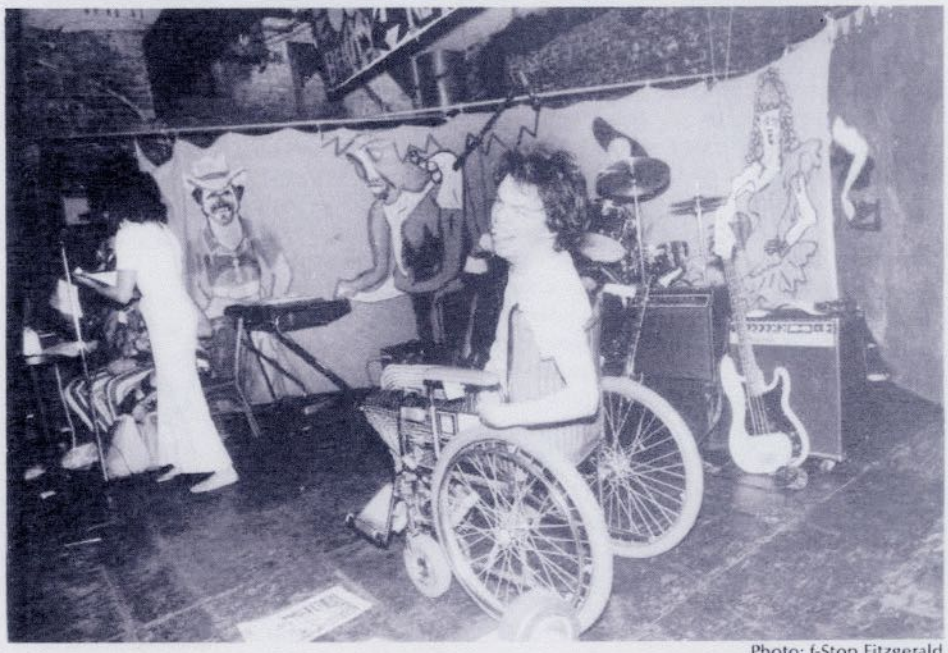


Photo: f-Stop Fitzgerald

Moore spells out "He has five parents instead of two."

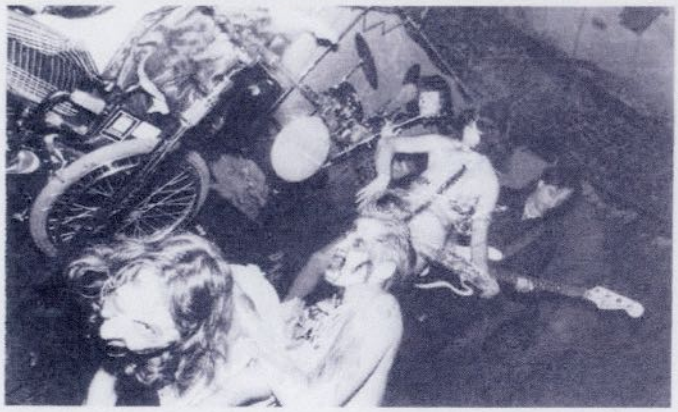
But he's your kid?

"Koala is my son."

Moore and his family started doing events like costume parades and concerts. They opened a storefront and taught workshops and more 48-hour processes. They went to shopping centers and handed out questionaires with questions like, "If it was OK to show your breasts in public, how would you show them?" All of this led them to San Francisco's North Beach and a former Filipino nightclub turned punk-rock landmark called the Mabuhay Gardens.

Nursed along by the Mabuhay's inspired promoter, a sort of Diaghilev of sleaze named Dirk Dirksen, what Moore began to call his Outrageous Beauty Review opened the show at the Fab Mab every Saturday night for three years. Billing themselves as "the dirty foam on the new wave," Moore and his players amused, inspired, infuriated or bored thousands of mostly bewildered people with their strange theatrical collage. At times the Outrageous Beauty Review was pathetic, a sick joke. At times it was hilarious. At all times it was sexy, because the performers wanted to be, and in the

A cthonic figure, fiery eyes, a laugh like a wild pig



main they were ordinary people whom Frank Moore had somehow given permission.

A typical night at the Outrageous Beauty Review would go like this: while outraged and disbelieving punkers rained down hors d'oeuvre popcorn (and the occasional beer bottle) on the performers, a female Elvis impersonator would do her number, followed by a guy in his underpants who hurled himself first into a bowl of warm noodles, then into a vat of chocolate pudding. After that, a trio of half-naked white girls writhed out an imitation of the Supremes accompanied by an incompetent rock and roll quartet ka-chunking out chords. For the grand finale, Moore himself was wheeled out between two female attendants, all clad in sort-of uniforms of the Green Berets. Boxes of dry ice were opened and lit by pulsating strobes as the attendants marched in place, singing "The Ballad of the Green Berets" accompanied by Frank Moore's howls. As the cacophony rose to a crescendo the performers began wrestling each other to the ground, tearing off each other's underclothes. You don't see stuff like that every day.

After he finished with the Outrageous Beauty, Moore's attention turned to the film "Fairy Tales Can Come True" and the erotic video.

Now he admits he is already impatient with video. "I'm tired of the video con," he admits. "I don't want people just to watch." Always in him there is the sense of trying to push back limits. "Whenever a new limit is crossed there is a release, which leads to comfortableness." The goal, he says over and over in his in-process bio is "the willingness to get involved with other people, to call the magic state from the people, to draw the audience into a state of unity."

Moore turns to his Atari and calls up a video game. He is instantly, completely absorbed. In the living room, two women members of the family are deeply into their knitting machines. One is a designer, the other a manufacturer of knits and sportswear. It feels good in the house, a happy, productive scene.

I interrupt Moore to ask him one more question, what's his next move?

"So far," he writes out, "all my fantasies have come true. I've never really known what comes next, but teaching feels like something I have to do."

He must have registered my surprise at his answer because he continues to spell out words: "If Chris Burden can teach, so can I."

It is time to go. The women stop work for a minute to pick Frank up, and carry him over to his recliner. Away from his board, he is out of word contact. I leave the house exhausted and shaken. "Performance art," Moore wrote in his print-out autobio, "has no passive audience and is done in the real world."

Most of us are stars in our own little plays, and few of us any less so than Frank Moore. But almost none of us have had to work with materials as intractable as Frank Moore's. His ability to function as an artist at all is awesome. But his talent as an erotic creator is nearly inexplicable. But I bet somewhere, in some half-buried myth on Crete or Cyprus, there is a figure like Moore. A cthonic figure, all matted earth and fiery eyes, a laugh like a wild pig. Glee. Lust. Crippled free of any daily endeavors. Powerful as Spring and choking on vines. An ancient modern, handed down from urge to urge. "I don't *ever*," I thought to myself walking back to my car, "want to ever hear *any*one—male or female—complain again that they can't get laid." Oddly comforted by the thought, I clicked on my engine, rolled back the roof to catch the late afternoon sunshine, and headed back across the bridge.

Photos: f-Stop Fitzgerald

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Frank Moore

MY FIRST STROKE OF GOOD LUCK WAS I WAS BORN SPASTIC, UNABLE TO WALK OR TALK. ADD TO THIS GOOD FORTUNE THE FACT THAT MY FORMATIVE YEARS WERE IN THE '60S—MY FATE WAS ASSURED!

YES, I ALWAYS HAVE BEEN LUCKY. I HAVE A BODY THAT IS IDEAL FOR A PERFORMANCE ARTIST. AND I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A PERFORMER. WHEN I WAS A KID, MY YOUNGER BROTHER USED TO GET MAD WHEN PEOPLE LOOKED AT ME WHEN HE PUSHED ME TO THE MOVIES OR TO THE TEEN CLUB. HE CRIED. BUT I LIKED PEOPLE LOOKING AT ME. THAT IS WHAT I MEAN BY "I AM LUCKY." I AM LUCKY I AM AN EXHIBITIONIST IN THIS BODY. ONE TIME, I WAS WORKING OUT ON THE JUNGLE GYM OUTSIDE OF OUR HOUSE—A KID CAME BY AND ASKED IF I WAS A MONSTER. I JUST ROARED LIKE A MONSTER. IT WAS FUN.

I WAS LUCKY. I WAS NEVER UNDER PRESSURE TO BE GOOD AT ANYTHING, TO MAKE MONEY, TO MAKE IT IN "THE REAL WORLD," TO BE POLISHED—OR THE OTHER DISTRACTIONS THAT OTHER MODERN ARTISTS HAVE TO, OR THINK THEY HAVE TO DEAL WITH. SO I COULD FOCUS ON HAVING FUN, ON GOING INTO TABOO AREAS WHERE MAGICAL CHANGE CAN BE EVOKED. IN FACT, A MAJOR REASON WHY I AM WRITING THIS IS TO ENCOURAGE ARTISTS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN SO BLESSED WITH BODIES THAT MARK THEM AS MISFITS, TO ASPIRE TO BE MISFITS ANYWAY, TO DO MISFIT ART ANYWAY—EVEN IF YOU ARE HANDICAPPED BY YOUR NORMAL BODY. YOUR ROAD IS DEFINITELY HARDER THAN MY ROAD. BUT THAT'S LIFE.

MY ART IS ROOTED IN BREAKING OUT OF ISOLATION. UNTIL I WAS 17, I DID NOT HAVE ANY WAY TO COMMUNICATE EXCEPT THROUGH MY FAMILY MEMBERS. FOR A COUPLE OF MY TEENAGE YEARS, I WAS VERY HARD OF HEARING. MY HEARING CLEARED UP. I INVENTED MY HEADPOINTER WHEN I WAS 17. MY COMMUNICATION ISOLATION WAS THEN DISPELLED. BUT IT TOOK ME ANOTHER 10 YEARS TO

SHAKE OFF THE ISOLATION CAUSED BY MY ATTITUDES AND SELF-IMAGE. THIS EARLY ISOLATION ALLOWED ME TO OBSERVE LIFE AND PEOPLE AS AN OUTSIDER. I ALWAYS WANTED TO BREAK PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL ISOLATION—FIRST FOR MYSELF, BUT THEN FOR OTHER PEOPLE.

THERE ARE OTHER ADVANTAGES TO MY BODY. PEOPLE PROJECT ONTO ME CERTAIN MYSTICAL POWERS—LIKE SEEING THROUGH THEIR FRONTS TO THEIR REAL SELVES—SEEING THE PAST AND THE FUTURE—AND WHAT THEY SHOULD DO. THEY ARE REACTING TO SOME SYMBOL OF THE DEFORMED MEDICINE MAN. THEY USE ME AS A MEDIUM FOR GETTING THROUGH TO OTHER DIMENSIONS. BECAUSE OF THE SLOWNESS OF MY COMMUNICATION BOARD, THEY ARE FORCED TO SLOW DOWN. THEY CAN PROJECT WHATEVER THEY WANT, MISREAD ME WHEN IT FITS THEM. I AM A SYMBOL. AND BECAUSE THEY GIVE ME POWER AS A SYMBOL, THEY ARE AFRAID OF ME. IT WAS JUST MY LUCK TO BE BORN INTO THE LONG TRADITION OF THE DEFORMED SHAMAN, THE WOUNDED HEALER, THE BLIND PROPHET, THE CLUB-FOOTED "IDIOT" COURT JESTER.

THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF ART. THERE IS ART THAT CALMS, ART THAT PACIFIES, ART THAT SELLS, ART THAT DECORATES, ART THAT ENTERTAINS. BUT WHAT I AM COMMITTED TO IS ART AS A BATTLE, AN UNDERGROUND WAR AGAINST FRAGMENTATION. THE BATTLE IS ON ALL REALITIES. THE CONTROLLERS HAVE ALWAYS TRIED TO FRAGMENT US FROM EACH OTHER. IMPRISON US IN ISLANDS OF SEX, COLOR, RELIGION, POLITICS, CLASS, LABELS, ETC., ETC., ETC., ETC., ETC.—THEY FRAGMENT OUR INNER WORLDS, THEY BLOW OUR INDIVIDUAL REALITIES APART AND PLAY THE PIECES AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. THEY

1. Frank Moore in a 12-hour performance, Mud Dance *(1977), at the San Francisco Art Institute. (Photo by K. Jennings)*

2. "Sonny and Cher" (Frank Moore and Linda Mac) from Outrageous Road Show *(1984) at New Generic in San Francisco. (Photo by M. Sullivan)*

ARE US, OR A PART OF US. THEY ARE THE CONTROLLERS, THE POLITICIANS, THE SEXISTS, THE WOMEN'S LIBBERS, THE PORNOGRAPHERS, THE CENSORS, THE MORALISTS, THE CHURCH, THE MEDIA, THE BUSINESSMEN, EDUCATORS, THE VICTIMS, AND THE POWERFUL.

THEY ARE US.

I THINK PERFORMANCE IS BEING RUINED BY TRYING TO PACKAGE IT AS ENTERTAINMENT, AS OFF-BEAT CABARET. WHEN SOMEONE GOES TO A CABARET, HE KNOWS THERE ARE CERTAIN LIMITS INVOLVED SUCH AS THAT EACH ACT MUST END BEFORE ANOTHER BEGINS; BUT IN PERFORMANCE, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE. A PERFORMANCE CAN LAST FOR A MINUTE OR IT CAN LAST FOR DAYS. PERFORMANCE CAN START IN ONE SPACE BUT THEN MOVE TO ANOTHER. PERFORMANCE CAN BE STORYTELLING, IT CAN BE A GUY THREATENING YOU WITH A BASEBALL BAT, IT CAN BE A GUY HANGING BY HIS SKIN, OR THROWING FOOD, OR ANYTHING. IN PERFORMANCE ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. AND THAT IS WHAT GIVES YOU AN EXTRA EDGE TO CREATE DREAMS.

PERFORMANCE, LIKE ANY AVANT-GARDE ART, IS THE WAY SOCIETY DREAMS; IT IS THE WAY SOCIETY EXPANDS ITS FREEDOM, EXPLORES THE FORBIDDEN.

THIS WAS WHAT SEALED ME INTO A PERFORMANCE LIFE.

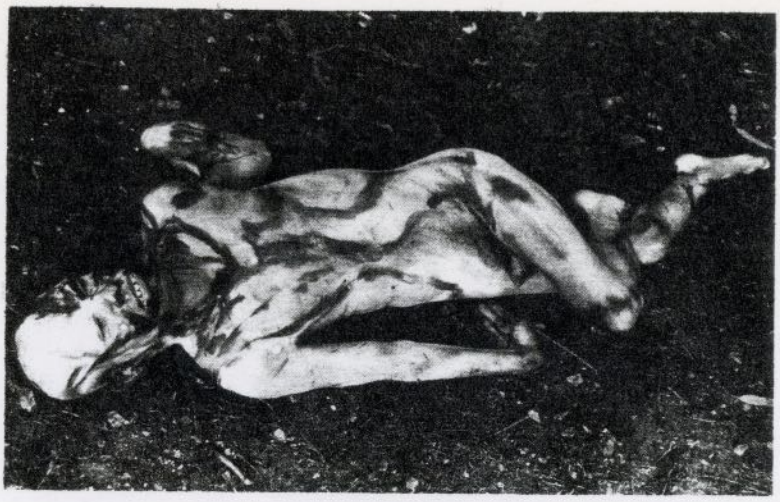
IN 1972 I HAD JUST FINISHED TAKING A VERY INTENSIVE FILM COURSE IN SANTA FE. I HAD NO MONEY TO MAKE REAL FILMS. SO I STARTED LOOKING FOR A WAY TO WORK WITH PEOPLE. I WANTED TO SEE PEOPLE NUDE, AND TOUCH THEM, AND CREATE AN INTENSITY BETWEEN US. PAINTING WAS THE FIRST ATTEMPT. I USED TO SELL PAPERS ON A CORNER TO FIND PEOPLE TO PAINT. BUT ONCE THE PERSON WAS POSED THE SITUATION WAS STILL, NOT MOVING. SO I DID WHAT I CALLED NONFILMS—FOR WHICH I ASKED PEOPLE I MET WHEN I WAS SELLING NEWSPAPERS TO ACT OUT INTENSIVE EROTIC SCENES WITH ME. ALTHOUGH I HAD PLAYED WITH MY FRIENDS BEFORE IN NONSEXUAL EROTICISM, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I TRIED TO USE "SEXUAL" ACTS IN A NONSEXUAL ART FORM. I WAS SURPRISED WITH THE POWER THAT THIS RELEASED. BECAUSE OF THESE SCENES, THE PEOPLE STARTED TALKING ABOUT THEIR LIVES DURING THE SESSIONS AND SAID IT HELPED THEIR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS. NOT ONE PERSON MINDED THAT THERE WAS NO FILM. THESE NONFILMS WERE THE BASE FOR MY CAREER IN RELATIONSHIP COUNSELING IN THE LATE '70S.

BUT I WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THESE NONFILMS BECAUSE THEY WERE BRIEF RELATIONSHIPS THAT DID NOT GO ANYWHERE. SO I STARTED LOOKING FOR SOME OTHER WAY TO WORK WITH PEOPLE. I TRIED TO CAST A PLAY, BUT I COULDN'T FIND ENOUGH PEOPLE. I STARTED THINKING OF AN INTIMATE THEATRE WHERE THE LINE BETWEEN AUDIENCE AND ACTORS WOULD BE ERASED. I STARTED THINKING ABOUT HOW IF THAT LINE WERE ERASED, IT WOULD PLACE MUCH MORE RESPONSIBILITY ON THE ACTORS. THEY WOULD HAVE TO DARE TO TRICK THE AUDIENCE INTO THE INTENSE MAGICAL STATE.

I DIVIDED MY WORK—THE WORD "WORK" IS WEIRD—IT IS LIKE PLAYING—INTO TWO PARTS. THE FIRST PART IS PLAYED IN "REAL LIFE"—FOR INSTANCE, I GO UP TO A PERSON ON A STREET AND ASK HIM TO BE IN SOME PROJECT WHICH MAY CONTAIN SOME NUDITY AND PHYSICAL PLAY. THE NUDITY AND PHYSICAL PLAY AS AN IDEA IN THIS CONTEXT IS A GREAT TOOL TO GET UNDER THE POLITE CHATTER SURFACE TO THE MORE MEANINGFUL THINGS, AND OFTEN MORE INTIMATE, MORE PERSONAL STUFF—WHICH IS, AFTER ALL, THE AIM OF THE PIECE. I CAN SEE THIS KIND OF PIECE LASTING ANYWHERE FROM A FEW SECONDS TO SEVERAL HOURS.

THE SECOND PART IS A PIECE IN A CONTROLLED SPACE, SUCH AS MY STUDIO, IN WHICH THERE IS A FORM GOING ON, GIVING THE PERSON A REASON TO BE THERE WITH ME.

THIS KIND OF PERFORMANCE IS DIFFERENT THAN NORMAL THEATRE. IN THIS KIND, THERE IS NO REAL SCRIPT. EVEN IF YOU HAVE A SCRIPT, IT REALLY IS A PROP. THE REAL



3. *Frank Moore as* Fiesto, *July 1986, in Berkeley, California. (Photo by D. Moore)*

COURSE OF ACTION IS SHAPED BY THE PERFORMER SO THE FLOW OF THE PIECE WILL GO FORWARD AND DEEPER.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN ME AS THE ARTIST AND MY AUDIENCE, HOW I CHANGE THEM AND HOW THEY CHANGE ME, THAT MAGICAL STATE IN WHICH WE INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER. I, AS THE PERFORMER, MUST CREATE AROUND THE PEOPLE, BY PLAYING FOR AND TO THEM, BY LETTING THE PERFORMANCE TAKE ME OVER AND GUIDE ME—EVEN WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE THE OTHER PEOPLE ARE DOING ALL OF THE ACTION. THE ULTIMATE GOAL IN MY PERFORMANCE IS TO CREATE A REALITY, NOT AN ILLUSION, WHICH THE AUDIENCE AND I ARE IN—EVEN IF I HAVE TO USE ILLUSIONS TO GET TO THIS REALITY.

THIS RAISES THE QUESTION OF MANIPULATION. ALMOST ANY TIME YOU PERFORM TO AN AUDIENCE, YOU MANIPULATE THE AUDIENCE. LET'S GET BEYOND THE NEGATIVE CONNOTATION OF THE WORD "MANIPULATE." PEOPLE GO TO THE THEATRE, MOVIES, CONCERTS, DANCE COMPANIES, ETC., TO HAVE THEIR EMOTIONS MANIPULATED. THEY COME INTO THE PERFORMANCE AREA WITH A WILLINGNESS TO BE MANIPULATED BY THE ARTISTS WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITS. BUT IN MY PERFORMANCES, THE ONES WHICH ARE NOT DIVIDED FROM THE REST OF LIFE BY A THEATRE OR A STAGE, THERE IS NO WAY TO TELL THE PERSON SHE IS ENTERING A PERFORMANCE. WHEN I HAVE A FORMAL STRUCTURE, A THEATRE SPACE, AND A SET TIME ENDING—WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON IS NOT WHAT IS SAID TO BE HAPPENING. ALSO IT IS A REALITY THAT IS HOPEFULLY BEING CREATED—PEOPLE WILL BE AFFECTED, INFECTED, AND EFFECTED BY THIS REALITY.

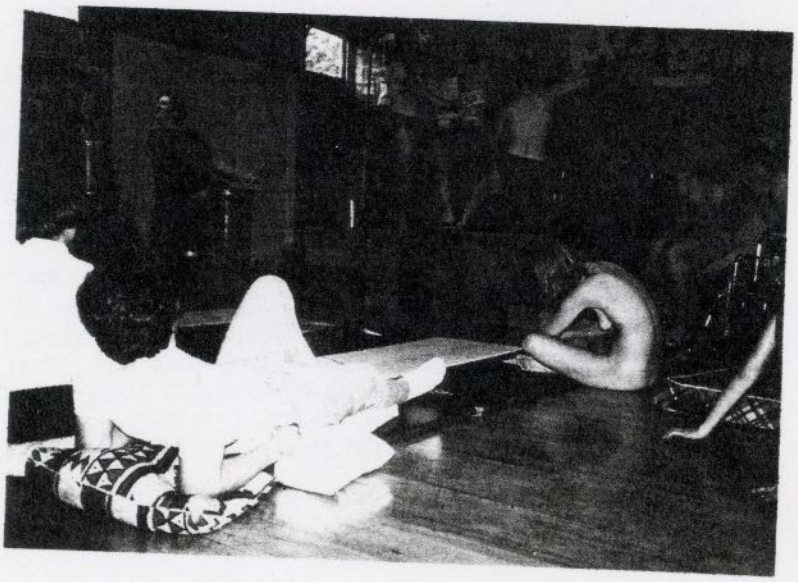
PERFORMANCE OBVIOUSLY GOES MUCH FARTHER BACK THAN 1909 WHEN IT BECAME A FORMAL ART FORM. I THINK PERFORMANCE CAME INTO EXISTENCE TO FILL A VOID IN

WESTERN LIFE. THE VOID WAS THE LACK OF MAGIC AND INSPIRATION. THE TWO AREAS OF CREATIVITY, THEATRE AND RELIGION, THAT TRADITIONALLY WERE THE SOURCE OF THIS MAGICAL INSPIRATION HAD LONG AGO MOVED FROM MAGIC TO ENTERTAINMENT AND POLITICS. THIS VOID ALSO GAVE BIRTH TO PSYCHOLOGY DURING THE SAME TIME PERIOD. I OFTEN GET THE CRITICISM THAT MY WORK IS REALLY PSYCHOLOGY AND THERAPY, AND NOT ART. WHEN IT IS REALIZED THAT PSYCHOLOGY AS A FORMAL SCIENCE AND PERFORMANCE AS A FORMAL ART WERE BORN AT THE SAME TIME, THIS CRITICISM CAN BE ANSWERED. PERFORMANCE AND PSYCHOLOGY ARE BOTH INVOLVED IN SPIRITUAL HEALING.

I SEE PERFORMANCE AS EXPERIMENTS IN HUMAN POSSIBILITIES. TO DO THESE EXPERIMENTS, I FORMED IN SANTA FE IN 1972 A WEEKLY DROP-IN WORKSHOP TO DO RITUALS LASTING MANY HOURS. A YEAR LATER, PEOPLE FROM THAT DROP-IN GROUP MOVED WITH ME TO N.Y.C. TO BE THE CORE OF A COMMITTED GROUP. BUT IT WAS IN BERKELEY THAT WE FOUND A PERMANENT HOME IN 1974. THERE, THE WORKSHOP SLOWLY DEVELOPED INTO A GROUP OF 30 PEOPLE.

IN THE LATE '70S WE STARTED OUR PUBLIC PERFORMANCES BY DOING LONG RITUALISTIC PLAYS. OVER THE YEARS, THE GROUP BRANCHED OUT TO DO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF LIVE AND VIDEO PIECES, INCLUDING *the outrageous beauty revue* [1978].

THE *o.b.r.* WAS A CABARET SHOW THAT TRIED TO SHORT-CIRCUIT THE CABARET LIMITS OF TIME AND STAGE. IT DID THIS BY BEING A SHOW OF PEOPLE WHO WERE HAVING FUN AND WHO WERE LIVING THEIR FANTASIES—A SHOW THAT



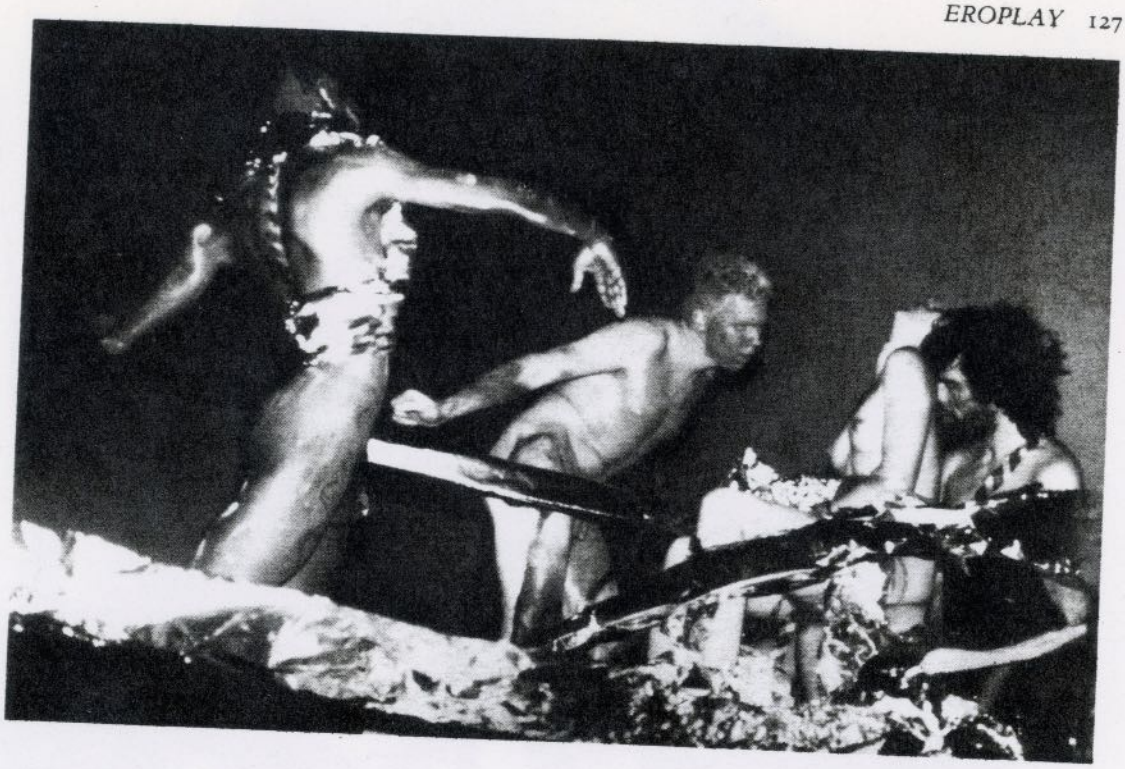
4. An all-day, private performance, Rapture Performance, *on 18 January 1987 in Berkeley, California. (Photo by Linda Mac)*

5. The audience and cast during the "Intimate Gestures" section of Intimate Cave *on 14 May 1987 at Franklin Furnace in New York City. (Photo by L. Barany)*

INCLUDED THE AUDIENCE DIRECTLY IN THE ACTION—AN UNPOLISHED SHOW THAT FLAUNTED NUDITY, EROTICISM, AND GORE IN A SILLY, CHILDLIKE PLAYFULNESS—AN EVER-CHANGING SHOW WITH PREGNANT SEX SYMBOLS, NUDE GIRLS, CRIPPLED ROCK STARS, MEN AS WOMEN AND WOMEN AS MEN WITHOUT ANY SEXUAL MEANING. THE *o.b.r.* RAN FOR THREE YEARS AND WAS BY FAR MY MOST POPULAR WORK IN TERMS OF HOW MANY PEOPLE SAW IT. BUT THE SUCCESS OF A PIECE SHOULD NOT BE JUDGED BY HOW MANY PEOPLE SEE IT, BUT BY HOW FAR IT WENT BEYOND THE TABOOS, BY ITS MAGIC POWER FOR CHANGE. BY THIS STANDARD, MY BEST WORK WITH THE GROUP WAS OUR 48-HOUR DREAM PERFORMANCES IN THE LATE '70S.

SINCE 1983, I HAVE BEEN DOING A PERFORMANCE SERIES AT U.C. BERKELEY WHICH HAS GIVEN ME A LAB WHERE I CAN DEVELOP PIECES BY DOING THEM OVER AND OVER WITHOUT THE PRESSURES OF MAKING MONEY OR ENTERTAINING. THESE PIECES ARE WHAT GOT ME THE N.E.A. FELLOWSHIP, AND THEY ARE THE ONES I DO ON MY TOURS.

IN MY WORK, I ALWAYS HAVE USED NUDITY AND PHYSICAL ACTS WHICH MOST PEOPLE WOULD CALL SEXUAL. IT IS JUST ONE OF MY WAYS OF BREAKING NORMAL REALITY INTO NEW WAYS OF COMMUNICATING AND RELATING. I COMBINE THIS WITH BREAKING TIME/SPACE TABOOS, MY UNIQUE BODY, AND OTHER TOOLS. BUT THE "SEXUAL" CONTENT OF MY WORK GRABS MOST OF THE ATTENTION.



6. Wrapping/Rocking *with Frank Moore (right) on 23 May 1987 at the Painted Bride Art Center in Philadelphia. (Photo by L. Barany)*

THERE IS A COMMON MISCONCEPTION ABOUT THE DEFORMED SHAMAN TRADITION—THAT IT GETS ITS POWER FROM THE MENTAL AND THE SPIRITUAL PLANE, SINCE THE PHYSICAL AND SENSUAL ARE ALMOST NONEXISTENT. IN TRUTH, THE WOUNDED HEALER USES HIS PHYSICALITY AS A CHANNEL TO UNITE THE SPIRITUAL WITH THE PHYSICAL.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A VERY PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL PERSON. THIS WAS HEIGHTENED BY MY EARLY PHYSICAL ISOLATION. IN THE EARLY '70S WHEN I WAS NOT YET OUT OF MY SEXUAL ISOLATION, I OBSERVED AS AN INTERESTED OUTSIDER THAT FREE SEX (CONFUSED WITH FREE LOVE) WAS NOT WORKING. IT WASN'T MAKING MY HIPPIE FRIENDS HAPPY. THIS OBSERVATION WAS AGAINST MY PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM. BUT I COULD NOT DENY THE FACTS. I STARTED LOOKING FOR NEW WAYS OF RELATING AND TOUCHING. I WAS LOOKING FOR A NEW FREE LOVE. MY PERFORMANCES, BOTH THE PUBLIC EVENTS AND THE PRIVATE NONFILMS, WERE MY RESEARCH, MY EXPERIMENTS.

I EXPERIMENTED IN USING THE EXCITED, AROUSED, PLEASURABLE ENERGY IN THE CONTEXT OF ART, OF PLAYING, RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING—NOT THE CONTEXT OF SEX. THIS RESEARCH REACHED A CLIMAX IN MY BERKELEY WORKSHOP DURING THE YEARS OF *the outrageous beauty revue.*

IT WAS FAIRLY CLEAR TO 30 OF US THAT THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PLAYING AND SEX. WE SAW IT HAD

SOMETHING TO DO WITH SEX AND "MARRIAGE" (THE WORD marriage IS ANOTHER WORD THAT HAS NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS HIDDEN WITHIN IT). SO WE DECIDED TO COMMIT OURSELVES TO HAVING SEX ONLY WITH THOSE TO WHOM WE WERE MARRIED. BUT WE EROTICALLY PLAYED (FOR LACK OF A BETTER TERM FOR IT) WITH ALL OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROUP.

THE EROTIC PLAY GOT WACKIER, MORE PHYSICAL. IT GAVE US A GREATER FREEDOM NOT ONLY WITHIN OUR GROUP, BUT IN SOCIETY IN GENERAL AS WELL. EROTIC PLAYING INTENSELY BUT PLAYFULLY RELEASED CREATIVITY WHICH WE USED IN MANY WAYS. SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES WERE ESTABLISHED. WE DID SEVERAL PUBLIC PERFORMANCES, AND A WEALTH OF PRIVATE PERFORMANCES. THERE WAS NO JEALOUSY OR POSSESSIVENESS BECAUSE IT WAS CLEAR THAT SEX WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED. THIS WENT ON FOR THREE YEARS.

AT A CERTAIN POINT, WE STARTED QUESTIONING THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE. WE DID NOT SEE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT WE 30 HAD TOGETHER AND BEING MARRIED. NOT SEEING ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MARRIAGE AND WHAT WE HAD AS A GROUP, THE NEXT LOGICAL QUESTION WAS, "WHY NOT HAVE SEX?" SO WE STARTED TO HAVE SEX OUTSIDE MARRIAGE, WITHIN THE GROUP. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY CHANGES APPEARED IN THE GROUP. JEALOUSY AND POSSESSIVENESS APPEARED. THE GROUP QUICKLY BEGAN TO FALL APART.

AFTER THIS BREAKUP, I FOCUSED MY WORK ON DEFINING THE UNIQUE PHYSICAL-SPIRITUAL ENERGY WE HAD USED, FORMALIZED IT IN MY ART TO TAP AGAIN INTO THE INTENSE, PURE PLAY WITH PEOPLE, USING THE RESULTING CREATIVENESS IN ART WITHOUT BEING DERAILED BY SEX.

I REALIZED THAT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WAS UNDERMINING MY WORK WAS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. THERE WAS NO WORD, NO NAME, FOR THE FORCE I WAS DEALING WITH. MY FIRST TASK WAS TO CREATE A NEW WORD: eroplay.

OUR MIND NEEDS LABELS. THERE IS SUCH A FORCE OR ENERGY, WHICH I HAVE LABELED EROPLAY. BUT THERE HAS NOT BEEN A WORD FOR IT. THE WORD sex HAS BEEN THE DUMP FOR EVERYTHING SENSUAL, ROMANTIC, PHYSICAL, OR FOR SHOWING MORE SKIN THAN USUAL. CARS ARE CALLED SEXY. POSES THAT DO NOT SHOW THE SEX ACT ARE CALLED SEXUAL. WEARING CERTAIN THINGS, MOVING CERTAIN WAYS ARE ALL CALLED SEXUAL, EVEN WHEN IT IS NOT LEADING TO THE SEXUAL ACT—EVEN WHEN THERE IS NO INTENT TO HAVE SEX.

EROPLAY IS INTENSE PHYSICAL PLAYING AND TOUCHING OF ONESELF AND OTHERS. EROPLAY IS THE FORCE OR EN-

7. Frank Moore in Passion Underground, *4 December 1987, at Artists' Television Access in San Francisco. (Photo by Kevin Rice)*

8. Playing with Reality, *Frank Moore's nine-hour private performance on 20 February 1988 in Berkeley, California. (Photo by Linda Mac)*

ERGY RELEASED BY SUCH PLAY. IT IS ALSO THE HAPPY, PLAYFUL ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE THAT COMES FROM SUCH PLAY. EROPLAY IS NOT FOREPLAY, EVEN THOUGH FOREPLAY IS EROPLAY.

FOREPLAY LEADS TO ORGASM—EROPLAY LEADS TO BEING TURNED-ON IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS AND IN ALL PARTS OF THE BODY—INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, PHYSICAL AROUSAL. IT CAN BE DIFFERENT EVERY TIME. SKIN TOUCHING SKIN SEEMS TO BE WHAT RELEASES THE FULL IMPACT OF EROPLAY. EROPLAY CAN BE INTENSE. IT IS LIKE WHEN YOU RUB A PUPPY ON ITS BELLY AND THE PUPPY GOES INTO A STATE OF RAPTURE, BOTH TOTALLY TURNED-ON AND RELAXED. EROPLAY IS THE BLISSED-OUT, WARM, RELAXED, TURNED-ON, TOTALLY SATISFYING FEELING OF A GOOD HEAD RUB.

EROPLAY IS FUN!

EROPLAY IS INNOCENT AND CHILDLIKE.

EROPLAY'S FOCUS IS ON PHYSICAL ENJOYMENT.

EROPLAY DECREASES ISOLATION AND ALIENATION. IT INCREASES SELF-TRUST AND TRUSTING OF OTHERS. IT MAKES YOU HARDER TO BE CONTROLLED. EROPLAY LEADS TO A LIFE-STYLE WITH ALL THESE CHARACTERISTICS. THE LIFE-STYLE LOOKS STRANGELY LIKE THE LOVE GENERATION, BUT WITHOUT DRUGS OR FREE SEX.

IN RECENT YEARS, OUTSIDE FORCES HAVE AFFECTED MY WORK. EDWIN MEESE'S POLITICAL WAR OF SEXUAL SUPRESSION AND THE BLANDNESS OF YUPPIES HAVE GIVEN MY ART SOCIAL ISSUES AGAINST WHICH I CAN DO BATTLE.

BUT IT IS AIDS THAT HAS STARTED PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR NONSEXUAL WAYS TO FIND, TO SHOW, AND TO GIVE PHYSICAL INTIMACY. EROPLAY IS A SAFE, FUN, LUSTY CHANNEL FOR FREE PHYSICAL TOUCHING. IT IS SAFE BECAUSE THERE IS NO PHYSICAL INTERCOURSE. IT IS NOT AN AVOIDANCE, AS CELIBACY IS. IT IS NOT SOMETHING SECOND RATE. EROPLAY IS SATISFYING IN ITSELF.

I HAVE DEBATED WITH MYSELF ABOUT NO LONGER RESISTING THE LABEL sexual. BY INSISTING WHAT I AM DOING IS NOT SEXUAL, I AM OPENING MYSELF TO PEOPLE QUESTIONING MY HONESTY AND INTEGRITY. IF I ACCEPT THE SEXUAL LABEL, PEOPLE WOULD JUST HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT THEY LIKE SEX IN ART—DECIDE WHETHER IT IS ART OR NOT. THAT WOULD BE THE DEPTH OF THE QUESTIONING. THEY MAY FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE SEEING SEX AS ART—BUT THAT UNCOMFORTABLENESS WOULD BE JUST FROM BREAKING THE TABOO OF SEX—WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? WHAT I AM DOING IS TAKING NUDITY AND ACTS THAT ARE USUALLY CONSIDERED SEXUAL AND GIVING THEM A NEW, NONSEXUAL CONTEXT. THAT CREATES A TENSION, A CONFLICT, AN EXAMINING, A LEAP INTO SOMETHING NEW. THAT IS WHAT I AM AFTER. THIS LEAP INTO NEWNESS IS WHY PEOPLE WHO ARE NORMALLY COMFORTABLE WITH CASUAL NUDITY AND CASUAL SEX SOMETIMES GET VERY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE NUDITY AND EROPLAY IN MY WORK. BY TAKING "SEXUAL" ACTS AND SINCERELY PUTTING THEM INTO A DIFFERENT CONTEXT, I CREATE ANOTHER REALITY, ANOTHER WAY OF RELATING. I ALSO CREATE CONFLICT WITH THE NORMAL REALITY—AND THAT CONFLICT MAY CHANGE, IN AN UNDERGROUND SORT OF A WAY, THE NORMAL REALITY. I THINK ART—OR AT LEAST THIS KIND OF ART—SHOULD CREATE CONFLICT AND CHANGE. AND I LIKE RELATING WITH PEOPLE IN THIS "UNNORMAL" WAY. THIS IS WHY I DO PERFORMANCE.

Frank Moore *started doing private, erotic performances and nonfilms in the early '70s. Developed from a workshop, his performance group began doing long ritualistic pieces then public events and experimental theatre. This period peaked in the late '70s and early '80s with the* Outrageous Beauty Revue. *Since then he has run a bimonthly series at the University of California, Berkeley, developing intimate rituals for clubs, galleries, and college performances. In 1985 he received an NEA fellowship and in Spring 1987 did a national tour, including a five-hour piece at Franklin Furnace in New York City.*

1987

HIGH PERFORMANCE

#37 A Quarterly Magazine for the New Arts Audience $6

HOT SHORTS

Frank Moore, the Bay Area's resident bete noir/flower child, has set his sights on the East Coast for a tour with "Wrapping/Rocking" at **Manhattan's**

"Wrapping/Rocking"

Sixth Sense Gallery and Philadephia's **Painted Bride**, and "Intimate Cave" at New York's **Franklin Furnace**, a five-hour performance that is likely to find participants taking off their clothes and rubbing their body parts together. The wheelchair-bound artist, who can neither walk nor speak, could bring back the participatory aspect of performance that dominated its salad days.

VIDEO ART / VIDEO ALTERNATIVES

BILL VIOLA • KIT GALLOWAY, SHERRIE RABINOWITZ & GENE YOUNGBLOOD

ADVOCACY VIDEO • INTERACTIVE VIDEO • VIDEO HISTORY • VIDEO SOURCES • MORE

PERFORMANCE BACK TO THE CAVES

by FRANK MOORE

I always have been lucky. I have a body that is ideal for a performance artist. And I have always wanted to be a performer. When I was a kid, my younger brother used to get mad when people looked at me when he pushed me to the movies or to the teen club. He cried. But I liked people looking at me. That is what I mean by I am lucky. I am lucky I am an exhibitionist in this body. One time, I was working out on the jungle gym outside of our house ... A kid came by and asked if I was a monster. I just roared like a monster. It was fun.

(Frank Moore was born with cerebral palsy - 99 per cent physically disabled, spastic, unable to speak. With his neck (the only muscles he can control) and a pointer attached to a leather headband, he can type on a word processor or spell out messages on a letter board strapped to his wheelchair).

I was lucky. I was never under pressure to be good at anything, to make money, to make it in "The Real World", to be polished ... and the other distractions that other modern artists have to, or think they have to deal with. So I could focus on having fun, on going into taboo areas where magical change can be evoked.

I can stare at people, laugh at them, touch their asses on the street ... because they don't think I understand. I can park my wheelchair next to them and observe them close-up without them realizing or changing. That is being so visible that it creates invisibility. But there are other advantages of my body. People project onto me certain mystical powers ... like seeing through their fronts to their real selves ... seeing the past and the future ... and what they should do. They are reacting to some symbol of the deformed medicine man. They use me as a medium for getting through to other dimensions. It had little to do with me at this time. Because of the slowness of my communication board, they were forced to slow down.

Years later, when I was going to the San Francisco Art Institute, Dough Hall told me my body gave me a tool that other artists spend years to create.

Painting was my first attempt. I used to sell newspapers on a corner to find people to paint. But once the person posed for me, the situation was still, not moving. So I did what I called NONFILMS, for which I asked people I met when I was selling papers, to act out intense erotic scenes with me . These were the closest in my pieces to sexual rather than erotic. Because of these scenes, people started talking about their lives during these sessions and said it helped their other relationships. Not one person minded that there was no film.

But I was not satisfied with these nonfilms because they were brief relationships that did not go anywhere. What I wanted to do was create intimacy -- that is, a situation in which anything is permissible, where people feel that secure. I didn't want to connect this intimacy with romance or sex because that would set limits. But that "anything is permissible" did mean a wide open erotic freedom.

I think performance is being ruined by trying to package it as entertainment, as off-beat cabaret. Some performance is entertaining. Some performance is cabaret. That is great. But when you try to package performance into a neat cabaret format, as I think is the trend, to make performance acceptable and profitable, it becomes a hip form of nightclub watching or groovy TV watching.

Many of the old garde like Paul McCarthy, Chris Burdon, Alan Kaprow, and Linda Burnham have stopped doing live performance. Moreover, many young artists, who would have focused on hard-core live art, are being seduced away by video and cabaret packaging. Performance, like any avant-garde art, is the way society dreams; it is the way society expands its freedom, explores the forbidden in safety, to loosen up. Society needs its dream art, just as an individual needs to dream or go insane. Our Moral Majority Society, bent on going backwards into the violent blank rigidity of a censored mind, needs taboo-breaking dreams to get back to freedom. Performance is perfectly suited for this dream role. I have always wanted to bring dreams into reality.

Linda Mac and Frank Moore: "I am lucky I am an exhibitionist in this body."

DOROTHY LOW

(..."And if people treat him like a baby - since he is physically helpless - that just allows him to get away with unsocialized behavior, like howling, staring, or inappropiate touching. In performance, Moore takes advantage of his disadvantage, becoming an unlikely guide into the pleasures of the body, taking audiences where they would probably never go without the example of his vulnerability and trust.

It is important to go all the way back to the primal fires around which humans huddled, telling one another dream stories ... not to entertain or impress one another, but to keep away fearful demons lurking in the cold darkness just outside the firelight. There was no division between reality and imagination. The Gods and Demons were real. In this ritual of storytelling, there was no division between the storyteller and listeners. They were all actively involved in the magical battle of survival. The rituals expanded to dance, chant, music. But the ritual was to affect magically the hostile world in which the humans found themselves. The audience of these rituals were the natural world, the Gods, and the Demons. They marked their bodies to create changes temporarily altered states of reality. They tattooed their bodies to create permanent change.

In regular theatre, you can climb up onto the altar of the stage (even when the stage is a rug or other defined area), and you don't have to interact with your audience, you are cut off from them. You don't relate to them directly ... which is the main goal of my performances. In theatre, what also blocks the magic that I am after, is the system of rules of aesthetics. This also was what happened in religion. When the priests climbed up to the altar, not only did they divide themselves from the people, but also from the vital magic.

The theatre paints pictures of "realities", both inner and outer realities. The audience just watches from the outside, watching a moving picture created by actors. The audience suspends disbelief, sits, and watches with their minds. The actors act. Everybody is comfortable and safe. Everyone has defined roles ... and when the audience left the theatre, they knew it had been just pretend. Actors just have to put on a good show.

The woman in the blue wig and a dress cut full of revealing holes kissed every spectator who entered the basement of Franklin Furnace's performance gallery. "Wait for a midpriest to guide you to the world of dreams, to your own special place," she murmured, "and then to the cave of the shaman."

I could hear the animal-like cries of the "shaman." Then as a guide led a group of us through the low light and burning incense, I saw him up on the platform, in his "cave" hung with quilts, sheets, and strips of aluminum foil. He sat there naked in a wheelchair.

My kind of performance is different than normal theatre. In this kind, there is no real script. Even if you have a script, it really is a prop. The real course of action is shaped by the performer so the flow of the piece will go forward and deeper.

Kids play very very physically both with their own bodies and others' bodies. They get turned-on by this play, turned-on both physically and mentally. This turn-on is not sexual in kids. Studies have shown that babies who are held, touched, and played with are more healthy and alert, weigh more, and have a lower rate of death than babies who are denied this eroplay. Studies also show that old people who live alone, who don't get physical and emotional contact, are less healthy and die sooner than people of the same age who live with others and get that physical contact.

When we grow up to adults, eroplay is linked to sex, maybe to assure procreation, but there may be different results when eroplay is connected to the sexual orgasm. We may need a certain amount of straight eroplay (not connected to or leading to sex) to be as healthy as possible.

We were free to approach the shaman and ask any question, the guide told us after washing and kissing our feet. We were free to touch the shaman's body, but if we did so we were granting him the same permission. Our guide, wearing a red gauze toga, poured us a drug (which tasted suspiciously like water) "to lower our inhibitions and fears." But no one had yet approached the shaman. Suddenly he lurched forward with a cry, flailing a stiff arm at one of the strips of foil hung along the front of his cave, knocking it down to see us better. And he howled"..)

What is important is what happens between me as the artist and my audience, how I change them and how they change me, that magical state in which we interact with each other. I, as the performer must create around the people, by playing for and to them, by letting the performance take me over and guide me ... even when it looks like the other people are doing all of the action. The ultimate goal in my performance is to create a reality, not an illusion, which raises the question of manipulation.

Almost anytime you perform to an audience, you manipulate the audience. Let's get beyond the negative connotation of the word "manipulate". People go to the theatre, movies concerts, dance companies, etc. to have their emotions manipulated. They come into the performance area with a willingness to be manipulated by the artists within certain limits. But in my performances, the ones which are not divided from the rest of life by a theatre or a stage, there is no way to tell the person he is entering a performance. When I have a formal structure, a theatre space, and a set time ending ... What is really going on is not what is said to be happening. Also it is a reality that is hopefully being created ... people will be affected, infected and effected by this reality. As a performer, I have to be able within myself to do anything that I feel necessary to create the magic of the performance without stopping to check my motives. This is the self-trust. This self-trust creates vulnerability.

(..."Linda Mac, one of Frank's wives, paired the people off in same-sex as well as opposite-sex couples, and then read them instructions she picked randomly from a bowl. "Rub your genitals, not for sexual reasons but for body comfort." "Hug one another." "Rub one another's bare breasts." Clothes began coming off, and someone behind me muttered to a friend, "Things like this used to happen in the Village all the time. It's sick." They were among those who left before the conclusion, when the helpers wrapped everyone in a giant circle of cellophane ribbon, toilet paper, and aluminum foil.

We live in a culture that is increasingly disembodied. Where William Burroughs argues that some day we may be "reduced to a magnetic field." Where Stelarc, the artist, suspends himself from hooks through his skin, stating that the body is obsolete. Where the computer generated Max Headroom is a star. Where you don't need your own body to have a baby. That Moore would be the one urging us to stay connected with our physical selves is both ironic and poetic, even if his performance didn't motivate me to explore the anonymous bodies at Franklin Furnace."..)

The performer has to take responsibility for his audience. This runs from their physical well-being while they are in the performance .. to not taking them out on a limb and leaving them there. A moral grey area is left after the performance, and they go back to the normal world, and they freak out because of the conflict between the two realities. In my mind, the freak out is an opening of doors .. which is the aim of the performance. But what the person does when the doors are opened is his responsibility.

Werkende vrouw

"Mannen blijven kinderen",
"Een man is polygaam",
Dat blijft me danig hinderen,
Al zit ik voor het raam.

Ik ben een hoer in eer en deugd.
Ik voorzie in een behoefte.
Ik behandel snikkels zonder vreugd.
Ik ben een zwaar beproefde.

Die sexuele spelletjes,
Dat is gewoon routine,
Maar vaak wordt het me weiletjes:
't Gezeik over hun Trienen.

Want Ans zit in de overgang
En trappelt als ze vrijt
en Tine is een ouwe tang,
Die pannelappen breit.

O geef me één volwassen man,
Geen sijbelaar en monogaam.
Nou, ik zou het wel weten dan.
Ik zat nooit meer voor het raam.

Maar liever zit ik voor het raam,
Dan dat ik als Mevrouw,
Castratieplannetjes beraam
Als straf voor zijn ontrouw.

Ach kerels nemen het niet nauw,
Van advocaat tot boer.
Nee, liever werkende vrouw
Dan een legale hoer.

door Mickey Walvisch

THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN

BERKELEY'S INDEPENDENT DAILY — ESTABLISHED 1871

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1987 BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Frank Moore

Disabled artist sends a message

By KEN GREEN

Last Thursday evening, performance artist Frank Moore went to great lengths to make a simple statement: The emotional needs of people with cerebral palsy are the same as anybody else's.

Earlier that week, flyers had been distributed announcing an unusual performance by a quadriplegic artist. The performance had been scheduled to start at 7 pm.

At 7:30 the performance had still not started. But a man with cerebral palsy arrived in a wheelchair and joined the audience. Perched on the arms of the wheelchair was an alphabet board and a piece of tape with the man's name, Jim Brown.

In obvious distress, Jim repeatedly asked those around him, "Where is Frank (Moore)? Where is Frank? He invited me here."

He communicated by pointing to the words and letters on the alphabet board in front of him.

Linda Mac and Rodney Gibson, two members of the audience, talked to Jim as the rest of the audience listened and looked on.

Jim spent 40 minutes telling the audience about his life with no friends. He also told them about how he had contracted blood cancer and was expected to die within a year.

He talked about Frank, his counselor, and how Frank was helping him to deal with his situation.

Jim said Frank had told him to come to the performance so that he could meet some friends before his death. Jim said that it had always been his dream to go out to coffee with some friends.

A graduate student in the audience, known only as Roobik, said he was astonished at how Jim had been treated. He said that he was willing to go out to coffee with Jim. Others joined in.

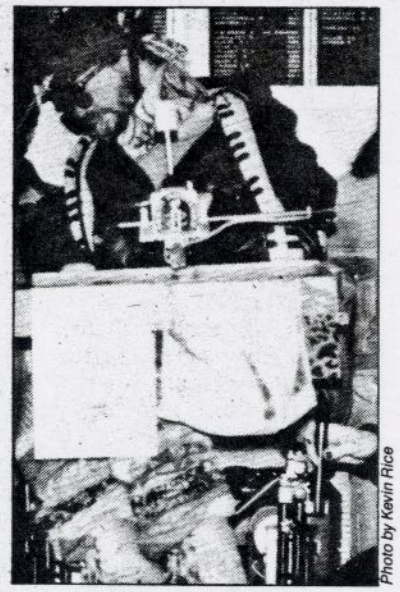


Photo by Kevin Rice

Performance artist Frank Moore

Because the performance seemed to have been canceled, the entire audience of 15 agreed to take Jim out to coffee.

Just as everyone was getting up, Jim communicated to Linda to rip off his name tag. Underneath, was the name "Frank Moore."

It was only then that the audience discovered that it had been a part of the performance. The whole thing had been a hoax. Jim was really "Frank," the counselor.

Jim did have cerebral palsy, but he did not have blood cancer. He was not going to die, and, in reality, had many friends.

Everyone was relieved to hear that "Jim" was going to be OK. Further, Frank Moore's message had been loud and clear — disabled people also deserve friendship and shouldn't have to be about to die in order to get it.

Rodney, Linda and another woman named Sabine turned out to be members of Frank's acting cast. In fact, Frank and Linda are married.

The cast members were eager to explain why they had chosen this type of avant-garde performance art.

Sabine, originally from Germany, said that after seeing one of Frank's performances she decided to join

because of her interest in theatre.

According to Mac, Frank does something different each time he performs. "We, the cast, never know from performance to performance what we will be doing until the last minute when Frank reveals the plan to us."

The audience also enjoyed this improvisational show.

Roobik, a UC Berkeley graduate student, said, "It is great. The mystery kept unraveling all night. I never knew what would be next."

Trent, another audience member, said, "I don't have much to say . . . and believe me, that's unusual."

Frank Moore has been performing, without charge, for 15 years. During that time, he has received a National Endowment for the Arts award and $5,000 from the federal government to continue his work.

Frank has weekly workshops for people interested in joining his cast. The local workshops last from three to seven hours. Frank welcomes all interested people, but participation is purely voluntary. Actors are selected on the basis of an interview.

Frank will have performances on Feb. 12 and 26, March 12, and April 2, 6 and 30 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 134, Dwinelle Hall, on the UC Berkeley campus. He will be touring Philadelphia, Denver and New York this spring.

Interested parties can call (415) 540-0907.

VERONICA VERA'S

NEW·YORK

EROPLAY IS FUN

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANNIE SPRINKLE, LES BARANY, JIM CROSS

Veronica does performance art with Frank Moore, whose "handicaps" are not those of brains or imagination.

Frank Moore does not act like he he is supposed to. Frank is a crippled guy, a spastic. His arms and legs flail about. His head seems too heavy for his neck as it rolls from side to side. But Frank Moore is not helpless. He does not sit quietly in a corner and wait to be third base. Frank is the director of a performance group based in Berkeley, California. He is the creator of "eroplay," a kind of performance art that involves nudity and physical acts. But in eroplay, the emphasis is on play, not on eros. Warm, sexy feelings may accompany eroplay but they are like the prize in the crackerjack box, an extra added attraction, not the main event. Eroplay is about having fun and it is about Frank Moore's desire to communicate with people, "not in a polite way, but in an intimate way."

The first time I saw Frank Moore, I caught him with his pants down. He was perfectly comfortable, lying on the guest bed in Annie Sprinkle's apartment. His friend Linda Mac sat beside him. I am no stranger to exhibitionism or nudity, but I still thought it was a strange way to exchange "how do you do's." My eyes kept drifting from Frank's face to his penis. Linda explained that Frank's doctor had advised him to sit bare-assed whenever possible because the hours he must sit in a wheelchair often result in his groin area getting chafed. Right away, I began to see that with his body, Frank could never, ever relate in a way that could be termed "polite."

Then a funny thing happened. Stripper Yvette Paris arrived to pick up some material from Annie. Yvette has an incredible body, all round voluptuous curves. She had poured herself into an amazingly tight sweater and pair of slacks. Yvette was covered—not a nipple

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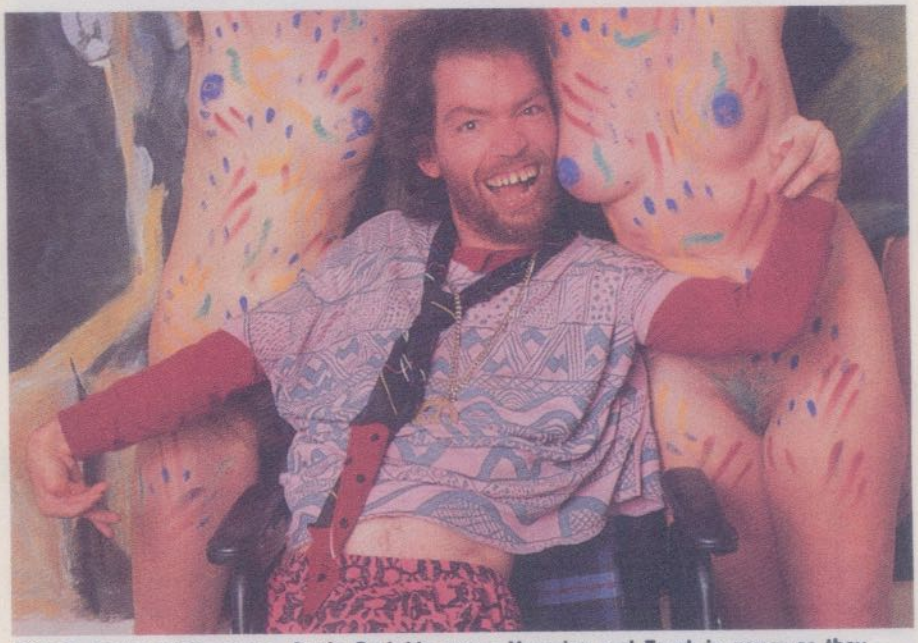
was showing—but she was so firmly packed she looked like a rubber doll blown up to full capacity. Before she entered the bedroom to meet Frank, she asked if he was dressed, so Annie, in an uncharacteristic move, threw a towel across Frank's genitals. I thought it very ironic that Yvette considered her own definitely provocative outfit more modest than Frank's casual nudity. Being around Frank Moore can make you think a lot.

Annie had invited Frank and Linda to stay in her apartment during the week of rehearsals before the performance of *Caves* which would take place on Thursday at the Franklin Furnace Gallery, an avant-garde art space. Annie was to play a retarded girl in the performance. I was supposed to participate but had to back out at the last minute because I did not think I had time for the rehearsals. When I met Frank and Linda, I regretted that I could not be a part of things. But Frank came up with a solution. He needed someone to perform with him on Saturday. There were no rehearsals required. All I had to do was sit on Frank's lap in the wheelchair and rock back and forth. We both would be naked.

I looked at Frank's seemingly frail body. "But how will I keep from crushing you?" I said. Again Linda explained. "Every once in while, you just shift around in the chair," she said, and demonstrated. In other words all I had to do was to rub my ass against Frank's penis. As Frank likes to say, "Not for sexual purposes, just for bodily comfort." I wondered if Frank ever got a hard-on.

Linda Mac often explained things for Frank because they had worked together for twelve years and she knew many of the answers. But Frank had no problem speaking up for himself. Sometimes he just made sounds, a wonderful laugh in which his whole body moved. Often he used his tongue to make letters and Linda would read the alphabet from his tongue as he spelled out his words. His tongue was the thickest, most powerful tongue I have ever seen. I wondered if he used it for sex. Part of our performance would include an interview and I already knew some of the questions I would ask.

This was an incredible opportunity. People like Frank Moore are not supposed to express sexual feelings or needs for affection, and certainly not voice any opinions about any of it. I knew about that from first-hand experience. I remember how freaked-out my parents got when my retarded sister decided to explore herself with her toothbrush. When Frank Moore was born, the doctors tried to convince his parents to put him in an institution. They said he had no intellect. But Frank's mother said she could look in his eyes and see that he was intelligent, and Frank's mother was right. For me, Frank was my sister talking and



Top: In *Caves* performance, Annie Sprinkle wraps Veronica and Frank in paper as they rock. Bottom: Frank Moore communicates "just for bodily comfort..."

every other "crip kid" or retarded person or amputee or old person or any of "those people" we gawk at or treat as invisible because they make us uncomfortable. Frank Moore not only refuses to be invisible, he is an exhibitionist. "I have the perfect body for it," he says. He refuses to be silent, he takes it one step further. He becomes the artist, the teacher, the shaman or magic man.

The performance of *Caves* was a magical experience. Each member of the audience was greeted by a scantily clad "midpriest," Linda Mac in a bright blue wig and a dress with lots of holes cut into it. She kissed my cheek and caressed my rump, then passed me on to the next part of the ritual. Another one of several male and female midpriests took each of us by the hand and seated us in a "nest" with other people on the floor. This midpriest gave us a magic potion to drink that tasted very much like water. We were assured that it was very safe but that we would definitely feel different for the next four hours, the duration of the performance. The midpriests also washed our feet. There were about sixty people in the room, seated five or six to a "nest."

The midpriests danced slowly around the room offering more "somala," the magic potion, to people. Annie entered as the retarded girl and played with the members of the audience. She did not speak. Every once in a while her breasts would spill out from her skimpy top. The performers wore very little clothing, some wore body paint. Only the musicians were dressed, all in black. They sat in their own nest and made strange sounds with their voices like bats in a cave.

If you think this is beginning to sound like the '60's you are right. It felt very '60's, especially when we were all in Frank's tent, playing with his body, rolling on his mattress, rolling on each other about six, sometimes ten people at a time. I tried to get Frank to feel me up, but his hand was real difficult to control. I took the opportunity to brush his genitals with my fingers. "Not for sexual purposes, just for bodily comfort." The deal was that we could all go into the tent to play with Frank, but by doing so we gave Frank permission to play with us.

Some people never entered the tent. Most did and rolled happily over one another. I opened my blouse. One girl in the tent with me was completely naked. Most of the guys seemed to keep their clothes on but they rubbed up to as many warm bodies as they could find.

Back in the large room again, Frank lay on a mattress while a woman dressed as a nurse pulled and poked at his body while he made noises. Then she lay on top of him and humped in a way that looked sexual.

I was reminded of a scene which Frank described in one of the letters he had sent as introductory material:

"I always hated physical therapy . . . a waste of my time, trying to become normal. But when I was eighteen, I had pool therapy. The therapist, a good natured woman with a son my age . . . holding me in the warm swimming pool. Letting me move my body against hers, always laughing. It felt good. I think she knew I got physically turned-on during these sessions . . . Not like sexual release . . . but a physical warm glow. I was happy and relaxed after these weekly sessions."

About two thirds of the audience stayed the full four hours. When we were about forty people, we formed two circles. The inner circle was told that they would be active. Those who chose the outer circle would watch, but even their watching was part of the performance. Linda read instructions that she pulled out of a hat. Each of us in the inner circle had a partner. My partner was Frank. Together, we

FRANK MOORE 540-0907
YES A 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ALL NO
IS IF AT BE OF I AND THE BUT WHY WHO
ON YOU TO OR FOR AM WAS ARE DO HOW WHAT
IN HE M N B V C X Z GET WHEN
THEY SHE CAN WHERE
THEM IT L K J H G F D S A MAY WERE
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THAN ME DOES DID NOT DON'T HAVE EVEN EVER
THERE HIM HER ANY GIVE WANT NEED EVERY AFTER
THIS HIS SOME THING THINK TIME BEFORE ALWAYS

Frank with helper Linda Mac and the alphabet board and pointer with which he communicates. Opposite page: Some moments from the *Caves* performance piece.

followed the instructions from the hat. "Rub each other's noses" . . . "Put your head under your partner's shirt" . . . (Frank wasn't wearing a shirt or for that matter anything. I wore a big, pink man's shirt and a black lace bra. My shirt wrapped round his head like a tent. Frank looked real happy . . . "Touch one another's genitals, not for sexual purposes, just for bodily comfort." (This was everyone's favorite instruction and drew laughs and giggles each time it was read.)

As I looked around, I saw that Frank and I were not the only ones having a good time. So was everyone else. Sure, some people, especially one guy, looked like they were getting off on something beside bodily comfort, but most people just seemed to be enjoying touching and being touched without the embarrassment or the pressures of sex. Frank says, "What I am doing is taking nudity and acts that are usually considered sexual and giving them a new, nonsexual context. That creates a tension, a conflict, an examining, a leap into something new. That is what I am after."

At one time Frank lived in a community with thirty people. They all decided they would only have sex with the people to whom they were married, and very few were married. But they would eroplay with all the people in the group.

"The eroplay became more intense, more playful," writes Frank. "We as people got wackier, more physical . . . By eroplaying intensely but playfully, it released a certain creativity which we used in many ways. Successful businesses were established. We did several public performances, a stage show (*The Outrageous Beauty Review* that ran for three years in San Francisco), and a wealth of wacky private performances. All of these had the vital energy of eroplay, of unlimited possibility. We were kids playing together even though we were adults . . . The eroplay could become very intimate, physical, soft and sexy but there was no jealousy or possessiveness because it was clear that sex would not be involved. This went on for three years."

The big "But . . . " came when the people in the group decided to have sex. They all felt committed to one another, so they decided to have sex outside of marriage, within the group.

"Almost immediately there were changes. Jealousy and possessiveness appeared." Within three months the group had dissolved.

Frank Moore believes in the creative potential of the energy released through eroplay. That is what he wants to tap into with his performers and his audience; that is what he wants to share.

At the conclusion of the performance, Annie, Frank and the Nurse sat nude in the middle of the "cave" and rocked together while Linda read a Frank Moore poem entitled "Wrapping and Rocking." The midpriests wrapped them and all of us together in saran wrap and toilet paper and ribbons and aluminum foil. The movement of the three in the center connected with all of us. Soon we were rocking together. We hooted. We made noises and rocked all wrapped together. I thought of the "healing circle" I had been to earlier in the week. Healing circles have become very popular in New York and California, especially since AIDS. People come together in a room just to talk and meditate and share experiences and sometimes to touch, to massage each other, to be intimate without being sexual. Not everyone who comes to the circle is physically sick; some like me, come just because the vibes are good.

"The three nude fingers,
Using magical passion to melt
together,
Rock like the blind,
Like the insane,
Like the holy men,
Like lovers . . .
And the magical melting spreads
out of the cave
And into the world."*

As I left the Franklin Furnace that night, I had the feeling that the joy, the love and freedom of the '60's were really not so very far away.

*"Wrapping and Rocking," © 1986, Frank Moore.

Two days later, I had the opportunity to perform with Frank. We would re-enact the "wrapping and rocking" part of the *Caves* performance. I was kind of nervous earlier in the week as I thought about it. I had not been nude in public for some time and I was not sure how I felt about my body, or even how I felt about performing on the lap of a crippled guy in a wheelchair. I was nervous, but in a good kind of way. A movie company and a cable magazine had by this time heard about Frank and would also be there to document the event, which meant that whatever I did would be recorded for posterity, in other words, be around to haunt me.

"Remember, artists take risks," said Annie.

And Frank has written, "Artists . . . need to be warriors who are willing to go into the areas of taboo, willing to push beyond where it is comfortable and safe to explore and build a larger zone of safeness."

A curious thing happened. On the actual day of the performance I was not at all nervous. I decorated my hair with flowers, looked at my beautiful body in the mirror and then went out and lay with Frank Moore in the wheelchair. He cradled

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VERONICA VERA'S NEW YORK

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me; I cradled him. I tossed my head and stuck my tongue out and we made noises together. His wheelchair supported me with the strength of King Kong. I stretched my back and relaxed in his flesh and metal embrace. I lifted my buttocks from his lap and rubbed against his penis. "Not for sexual purposes, for bodily comfort." We melted together.

In part two of our performance, I interviewed Frank. Finally I could have my questions answered. Now, you may wonder how we communicated, since it is not likely that I understood Frank's tongue alphabet. Frank has a wonderful board that he invented himself. It looks like a ouija board. The entire alphabet is printed on it and numbers and also some commonly used words. Around his head, he wears a leather band to which is attached a long pointer and with this Frank can "talk." It is fun to talk with Frank on his board. You are forced to slow down a little, which is a pleasant experience.

I quickly learned that Frank's penis does get hard. "Just like anyone's." He laughed at the question. And "sometimes" he uses that strong tongue for sex. Frank also paints by use of a brush attached to a hard hat and he sometimes talks via computer.

"People think that life is hard and so it is hard," says Frank. "I was lucky," he writes, "I was never under pressure to be good at anything . . . so I could focus on having fun, on going into taboo areas where magical change can be evoked."

This "fun" philosophy has enabled Frank to create art, form communities, graduate from film school, hitchhike across the country, have a shortlived career as a "guru." He even married the homecoming queen!

At our final meeting, we are at breakfast in Annie's apartment: Frank, Linda Mac, me, Annie and performance artist Karen Finley, also well known for her outrageous sexual presentations. We are all curious about how Frank got to be the way he is.

"What were your parents like?" asks Karen.

"Did you just decide one day to be strong?" I added. Frank and Linda explain. Says Linda, "I think that the spirit that you describe has always been there in Frank, but I

VERONICA VERA'S NEW YORK

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think in terms of him translating it into something workable, he made a conscious decision about that. At one point, Frank just decided that he was going to stop thinking he was ugly and that no one would ever want him. Those were the ideas he got from his parents. His mother told him that to her and his father he was beautiful, but to other people he was not. She tried to protect him as he got older so that he would not be hurt because he could not have a woman to be with and because no one would want to have sex with him."

Frank, meanwhile, had been bribing his brother to buy him *Playboy* magazines. He had a different future in mind for himself, so he struck out on his own. "On his own," has always for Frank meant involvement with other people.

Eventually, he found the woman he wanted and he pursued her. "How do you pursue a woman?" I ask. He makes it sound so easy. "Like a missile," he says.

"But Frank, you could not exactly call her up on the phone . . . ?"

Frank explains that he got other people to put him in her room, so that when she came home he would be there waiting for her. Then when they lived in a large commune, Frank made sure he got the job of deciding who would live with whom, and he had his future wife, Debby, move in with him.

"If I may say so, you are quite a manipulator, Frank," says Karen Finley, as we all laugh.

Then Debby brought him home to meet her parents. They were aghast. Debby was talented and beautiful. She could have had anybody. She could have married a doctor. Instead, Debby danced joyfully around Frank Moore in his wheelchair. That was a dozen years ago. They have been together ever since.

"Thinking that I was ugly had not worked," said Frank, "So I decided to try something different. I decided that I was beautiful and that I could get what I want. I called it 'faking it.' "

"Within a week of this decision," says Linda, "people started to tell Frank that he looked different and they began to relate to him in a different way."

"After a while," says Frank, "I forgot that I was faking."

The End!

the village VOICE

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Body Beautiful

The woman in the blue wig and the dress cut full of revealing holes kissed every spectator who entered the basement of Franklin Furnace. "Wait for a midpriest to guide you to the world of dreams, to your own special place," she murmured, "and then to the cave of the shaman." I could hear the animal-like cries of the "shaman." Then, as a guide led a group of us through the low light and burning incense, I saw him up on the platform, in his "cave" hung with quilts, sheets, and strips of aluminum foil. He sat there naked in his wheelchair.

We were free to approach the shaman and ask any question, the guide told us after washing and kissing our feet. We were free to touch the shaman's body, but if we did so we were granting him the same permission. A naked man decorated in whorls of red body paint, his penis in green, danced by with a videocam. Musicians yelped and clicked and clucked to one side. Our guide, wearing a red gauze toga, poured us a drug (which tasted suspiciously like water) "to lower our inhibitions and fears." But no one had yet approached the shaman. Suddenly he lurched forward with a cry, flailing a stiff arm at one of the strips of foil hung along the front of his cave, knocking it down to see us better. And he howled.

Frank Moore, the self-described shaman, was born with cerebral palsy—99 per cent physically disabled, spastic, unable to speak. "I am lucky I am an exhibitionist in this body," he once wrote in an essay about his work. "I have a body that is ideal for a performance artist." With his neck (the only muscles he can control) and a pointer attached to a leather headband, he can type on a word processor or spell out messages on a letter board strapped to his wheelchair. "People project onto me certain mystical powers," the essay continued. "They are reacting to some symbol of the deformed medicine man." And if people treat him like a baby—since he is physically helpless—that just allows him to get away with unsocialized behavior, like howling, staring, or inappropiate touching. In performance, Moore takes advantage of his disadvantage, becoming an unlikely guide into the pleasures of the body, taking audiences where they would probably never go without the example of his vulnerability and trust.

DOROTHY LOW

Linda Mac and Frank Moore: "I am lucky I am an exhibitionist in this body."

Maybe because I spent the '60s where there were no '60s, Moore's piece felt to me like five real hours from the Summer of Love, complete with group grope. Nothing nostalgic, parodic, or ironic about it either. To the first daring soul who ventured up to Moore's cave, he tapped out the lines: "They are afraid. They don't know what they are missing." The '60s is such an embarrassing era to reenter after 20 years of cooling off. But as the evening wore on, the room began to look like the photo of a Living Theater event—half-naked people walking through a mess.

Two of his gauze-clad helpers carried Moore out to a mat on the floor, and a woman read a text he'd composed about the "bony fingers" who cared for him. He lay there on his side, just as he'd been placed, his fingers twitching. "You may now explore Frank's body," the reader announced. One woman did. The story continued, as he and another performer acted out an apparent sexual fantasy about a new nurse (the "new prodder"). Total self-indulgence, I thought. But I realized later that this helped prepare the audience to join Moore in what he calls "eroplay." The nurse scene had been so real—the nudity, the obvious affection, the simulated lovemaking—that the embarrassment level in the room rose palpably. Theoretically, we would soon reach our embarrassment threshold and be able to do anything.

Helpers carried Moore back to his cave, where we could now "play" with him, those of us "willing to push beyond where it's comfortable and safe." The woman narrating began to explain eroplay—"an intense physical playing or touching of oneself and others"—as perhaps eight or 10 people drifted into the cave. "Eroplay is innocent and childlike," read the woman with the blue wig, who turned out to be Moore's wife, Linda Mac. Eroplay would connect us with our own bodies and with other people. Eroplay was physical pleasure for its own sake, unconnected to sex or romance.

I didn't doubt that this was how Moore experienced it, but the next ritual certainly looked like a love-in. Over half the remaining audience of 30 chose to participate, seating themselves around Moore, who'd been carried to the center of the basement. Linda Mac paired the people off in same-sex as well as opposite-sex couples, and then read them instructions she picked randomly from a bowl. "Rub your genitals, not for sexual reasons but for body comfort." "Hug one another." "Rub one another's bare breasts." Clothes began coming off, and someone behind me muttered to a friend, "Things like this used to happen in the Village all the time. It's sick." They were among those who left before the conclusion, when the helpers wrapped everyone in a giant circle of cellophane, ribbon, toilet paper, and aluminum foil.

We live in a culture that is increasingly disembodied. Where William Burroughs argues that someday we may be "reduced to a magnetic field." Where the artist Stelarc suspends himself from hooks through his skin, stating that the body is obsolete. Where the computer-generated

on edge

C. CARR

Max Headroom is a star. Where you don't need your own body to have a baby.

That Moore would be the one urging us to stay connected with our physical selves is both ironic and poetic, even if his performance didn't motivate me to explore the anonymous bodies at Franklin Furnace. After Moore's show, when he'd again been settled in his wheelchair with his pointer, I asked him how he'd decided he was a shaman. "A woman told me if I would stop hiding my body, it would be a tool," he spelled out methodically. The first thing I'd noticed about him close-up was the expression on his face. "You look happy," I said, and he tapped out, "Always." ■

A PALSIED PERFORMER GETS PHYSICAL (C.CARR, P.102)

THURSDAY
MAY 21, 1987

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PHILADELPHIA DAILY
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THE PEOPLE PAPER

Staff Photography by **Bob Laramie**

Linda Mac and Frank Moore get wrapped up in their work

PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS

When It Comes to Sex, Artist Has to Laugh

By **DAN GERINGER**
Daily News Staff Writer

Spastic performance artist Frank Moore, in town to get naked and do a Saturday night performance of his playfully erotic play "Wrapping/Rocking" at the Painted Bride Art Center, reads about Ellen Stohl, the paraplegic actress who will appear almost nude in Playboy's July issue, and laughs.

Laughter is the freest vocal thing Moore does. Because of cerebral palsy, he cannot control his muscles, except the ones in his neck. By using a pointer attached to his leather headband, he spells out his thoughts on a wooden letter board. His wife, Linda Mac, serves as his voice.

Moore is amused at the national debate Stohl's Playboy posing has created concerning sexual exploitation of the handicapped. "Disabled people are sex objects, too," Moore signs. "Why should Playboy exploit normal people and not disabled people?"

The laughter bubbles up within him and cannot be contained. "Besides," he signs proudly, "*I* was the first disabled sex symbol. I use my body as a tool, just like a sexy woman uses her body as a tool. She is just copying *me*.

"I have not read Playboy since I was a teenager. I will look at it first in the store to see if she is as hot as I am. Then I will decide whether or not to buy it."

The 40-year-old Moore is looking pure '60s in his purple poncho, yellow-and-white sneakers with rainbow laces and vintage peace symbol medallion. He is sitting in a purple wheelchair. His brown eyes are pure mischief.

Before he became a sex symbol, Moore remembers himself as one desperate human being. "Frank's parents told him that, to them, he was beautiful," Linda says. "But not to expect others to see it.

"So he didn't. He got depressed. Finally, he just decided to *fake* beauty, to start behaving as if he was really beautiful. After a while, he forgot that he was faking it and began to believe it. Then people began telling him that he actually looked different. He *became* beautiful."

Before his current opus — a dreamlike ritual that involves a nude cast literally bonding with members of the audience by means of toilet paper, aluminum foil and plastic sandwich wrap — Moore created his "Outrageous Beauty Review," a tacky mock game show that ran for three years at the San Francisco punk club Mabuhay Gardens.

"We had five disabled guys dressed up like the Village People, singing 'Macho Man,'" Linda remembers fondly. "We had a hostess in a big blonde wig and rhinestone eyeglasses who put tube steaks, beets, instant potatoes and candy corn in a blender, whipped 'em up and forced Frank to eat the guck out of a parfait dish."

"Once, I ate earthworms on stage," Moore signs. "They tasted much better than her food."

Linda, a former travel agent in Berkeley, first set eyes on Moore in 1975, when he wheeled into her office looking for information.

"He was in his big motorized wheelchair," she says. "He was wearing this bright-red hard hat. He looked *weird*. I wasn't used to dealing with disabled people. The whole thing was just too intense. I thought, 'I hope he doesn't come up to me.' Naturally, he did."

"I looked down her blouse," Frank signs. "I said, 'Gee, you'd be great in this play I'm doing.'" He laughs. "It worked because I am innocent. If I was into something sleazy, it wouldn't have worked."

"I read his writings," Linda says. "About how there was no Mr. Right and how real relationships were about agreeing to not walk out on each other. I wasn't doing well in my relationships at the time. What he wrote made a lot of sense to me."

Twelve years later, it still does.

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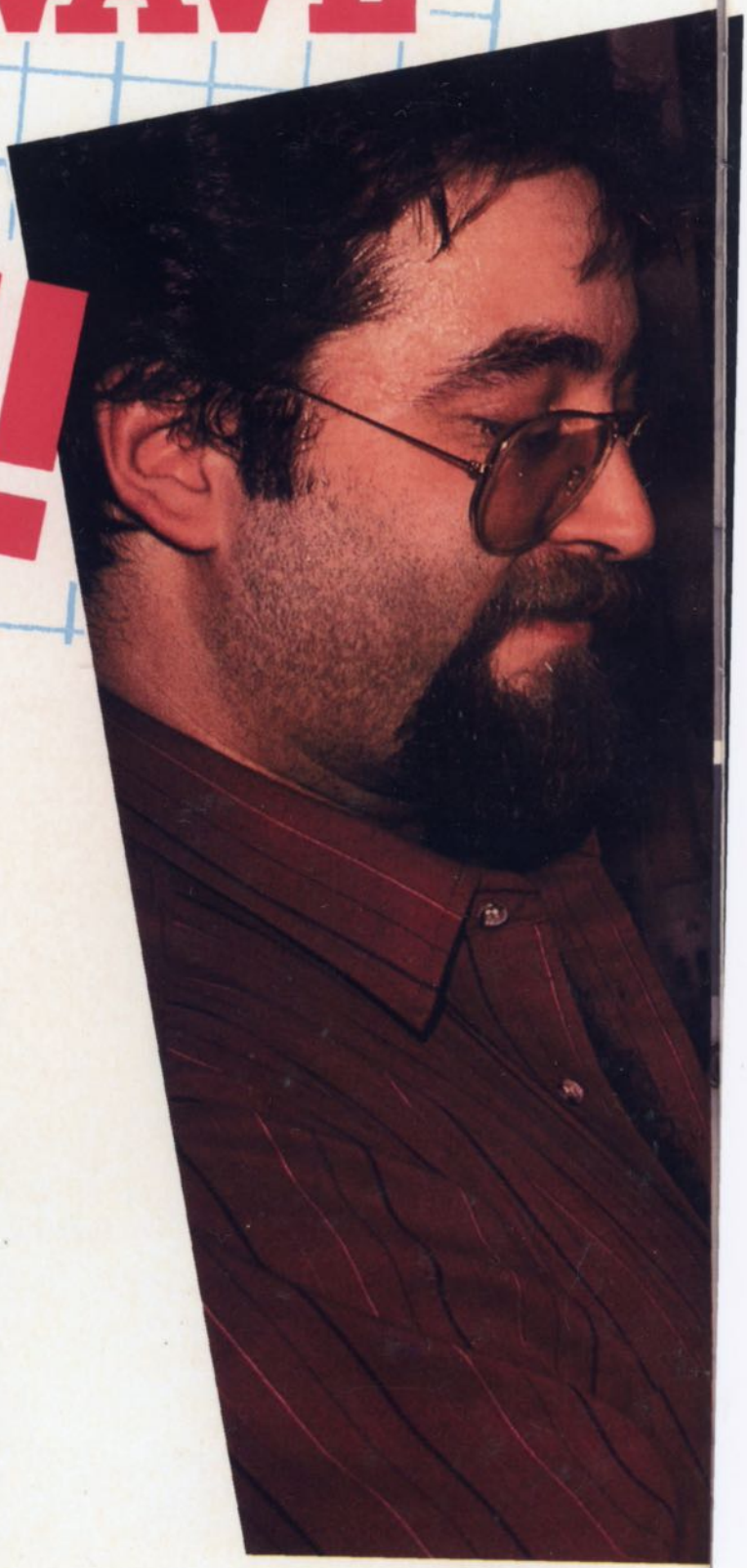
NUDE-WAVE ART!



The New Sexual Revolution!

Did you know there's a nude wave of new wave art today that's both naughty and nouveau, sort of like pussy on a palette? Vanalyne Green, a pretty young performance artist, acted out her piece, *Unmade Beds* in a San Diego art gallery. She donned a stripper's corset, complete with garters, stockings and silver high heels, then had simulated sex with a blowup doll she had purchased at a porno shop.

Afterwards, she was written up enthusiastically in *High Performance*, a prestigious art magazine. Her reviews—fabulous. Her audience that day was not porn or burlesque fans, but genuine art enthusiasts and intellectuals!

Open sexuality is being explored in all branches of the performing arts, but mainly it is exhibited in a phenomena known as 'Performance Art,' which was started by a group of *avant garde* experimental artists who are instigating a second sexual revolution!

Performance Art actually began in the '60s with various 'events.' Yoko Ono, for example, was a performance artist who did some very erotic pieces. In her *Touch Piece*, all the lights were turned out and the audience touched each other for anywhere from ten minutes to two hours!

Charlotte Moorman, a West Coast Performance Artist, got arrested for playing the cello in the nude! In a later variation, she played the cello with a bra (by Nam June Paik) made out of two little television sets showing her playing the cello!

There are a few new performance artists who are following Charlotte Moorman's tradition. Edwina Thorne takes it all off while she plays the trumpet. Black Jack Savage goes one step further and strips while standing on her head on a skateboard and

'One artist donned a stripper's corset and fucked a blowup doll!'

Annie Sprinkle poses as a living wall upon which fans write grafitti!

playing the violin. Quite a balancing act—artistically speaking, of course!

A very popular former stripper is Jody Maxwell, now retired, who was billed as 'The Singing Stick Licker From Missouri.' She would sing 'How Much Is That Doggie In The Window' while she sucked! You could call that 'bark art!'

With the late '60s came vagina painting, which George Maciunas, one of the fathers of performance art, took credit for. He would stage various public events in which he would have a female cover her pussylips with black ink, then press her snatch up against a piece of paper. Then he would sign the 'painting' on the back. Vagina art is worth big bucks these days—don't kid yourself!

Now there's Frank Moore, a Cerebral Palsey victim who practices his Nude Wave art from a wheelchair. Along with Linda Mac, his wife, Frank (who is completely crippled and 99% physically disabled and unable to speak) types on a word processor to spell out messages on a letter board strapped to his wheel chair.

'I am lucky I am an exhibitionist in this body,' he once wrote in an essay on his work. 'I have a body that is ideal for a performance artist.'

If people who see him perform publicly from an originally decorated 'cave' treat the new world-famous Moore as a performance artist idol, they have good reason. He takes advantage of his disadvantage, becoming an unlikely guide into the pleasures of the body.

As one recent performance came to a conclusion, Moore's assistants wrapped everyone attending in a giant circle of cellophane, ribbons, toilet paper and aluminum foil!

An innovative conclusion to a very innovative evening.

Making the transition from porn to performance art is Annie Sprinkle, whose most famous work is her Bosom Ballet, which she has performed numerous times. Understandably, given the size of her tits it's very, very popular.

What Annie does is wear long black gloves and her

Edwina Thorpe plays trumpet in the nude!

Frank Moore's famous 'toilet paper' performance!

'Annie Sprinkle performs her bosom ballet in black gloves and breasts (her own)!'

Bull masks and bare breasts at the Prometheus Project!

tits, which she then proceeds to jiggle, wiggle, shimmy, shake and in general toy with temptuously to music, actually making her breasts 'dance!'

Art fans and porn fans both like it!

Look for Annie Sprinkle to come out with her Bosom Tap Dance soon. Another plan in the works is the erection of a 'Brooklyn Bra Bridge,' in which she will attempt to erect an enourmous canvas bra that will span from Brooklyn to Manhattan.

As Annie says, 'Today Brooklyn, tomorrow the world!'

Or how about the Bronx, Annie. What about wrapping a gigantic bra all around Yankee Stadium?

Annie shook her head. 'No, I like L.A.!'

ce!

'Caves' is an orgy in progress without sex!

Nurse Annie 'heals' at the Performance Garage!

self-taught, frank moore has been painting since **1963**.
his work has been exhibited around the u.s. and canada.
in addition to oil on canvas, he also does live performance and video.

frank moore first came to be known in the **70**'s as the creator of the popular cabaret show, **the outrageous beauty revue**. in the **80**'s he became one of the u.s.'s foremost performance artists. in **1992** he was voted best performance artist by the bay guardian. in the early **90**'s he was targeted by senator jesse helms. for the last three years frank moore has been the publisher and editor of the acclaimed underground zine, **THE CHEROTIC REVOLUTIONARY**.

in addition to his book, **CHEROTIC MAGIC** and numerous other self-published pieces, frank moore has been widely published in various art and other periodicals.

frank moore's video works are award winning and have shown throughout the u.s. and canada.

Jello in Berkeley — all things weird and wild

By Burr Snider
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

YOU PRETTY MUCH know that you're in for something of an, uh . . . *unusual* evening when a member of the opening act, an *a capella* female rap group called The Yeastie Girlz, attempts to play Beethoven's Ninth on a tampon applicator.

Avant garde art or total goof? You be the judge.

You'd also have to be the judge about the "performance art" piece done by Frank Moore and his troupe. "Frank the Unicorn," as he is called, is almost totally disabled by cerebral palsy. He is confined to a wheelchair and can communicate only by tapping out words and letters on a Ouija board with a horn-like pointer strapped to his head. None of which has prevented him from putting on over the years a series of what he calls "ero-play" psychodramas, inviting audience members to not only group-grope with strangers, but to come up and fondle his own wasted, atrophied body.

Saturday night at the Julia Morgan Theater, Moore, his wife Linda Mac (dressed in thigh-high boots and a slutty dress with gaping, revealing holes cut in it), performed a medley of Sonny and Cher oldies to the accompaniment of a group of naked, body-painted, strobe-lit go-go dancers. You could call it a duet, but Moore doesn't so much sing as emit high-pitched dolphin sounds while he thrashes around in his wheelchair with an ecstatic expression on his face. (He says he is "always happy.")

It's definitely an art form that would have to grow on you, and you probably won't be seeing Frank and his friends appearing on "Dolly" anytime soon, but one must be thankful, one supposes, that you can still go to Berkeley for this kind of entertainment.

It was all only warm-up for the main bout, though. Jello Biafra, erstwhile lead singer and motive force for the seminal art-punk band known as the Dead Kennedys, was the focal point of the evening. Fresh from an obscenity trial in L.A. (felony charges were dropped after a jury deadlocked over the question of whether a graphically explicit poster by Swiss artist H.R. Giger that accompanied the Dead Kennedys' last album, "Frankenchrist," was harmful to children), Biafra's performance consists mainly of a hilarious recital of the absurdities and Kafka-esque horrors of being in the clutches of the California judicial system.

Styling himself "Cultural Terrorist No. 1," Biafra projects a smart-ass, arrogant declamatory style that is definitely a punkish put-off, but you can't escape the feeling that he's being deliberately provocative to catch your attention. He also, it must be said, deals in subject matter too important to be ignored. You might say that Biafra was wasting his time preaching to the choir Saturday night, and you might also wish that some of the set pieces that comprised the first part of his act had some more apprehendable wit to go along with the alienated bite, but that doesn't lessen the urgency of his message, which is that it is becoming increasingly dangerous in Ed Meese's America to be a rebellious, noncomforming, thinking person. Biafra came out with his polemic guns loaded and sprayed the audience with a barrage of deeply-felt invective about the nastiness of The Way Things Are.

His topics ranged through censorship, the superficial and increasingly fascistic consumer society, death squads, the prospect of George Bush as president, and Ollie-mania. One of the bits was called "Why I'm Glad the Space Shuttle Blew Up," the point of which is made only after you learn that the *next* shuttle was scheduled to carry a large payload of plutonium.

You could wish when things got a little rambly that Jello Biafra might subject himself to a tougher editor, and you could also find yourself cringing at some of the comic possibilities he either wasted or bludgeoned to death with his magnum force attack. But when the guy gets rolling a certain charismatic magic does begin to happen. A recital of fantasy band names — Islamic Speed Metal, Primer Gray Erection, Anchovy Smegma, Crotch Puppets — recalled the absurdist best of Lenny Bruce, and had the house rollicking.

Jello Biafra explores the weirdness of being in the grip of the California criminal justice system

It is becoming increasingly dangerous in Ed Meese's America to be a rebellious, noncomforming, thinking person

But Biafra really hit his groove when he put away his written material and just stood there and related the surreal nightmare that was his obscenity trial.

Biafra's *bete noir* is Tipper Gore and the Parent's Music Resource Center, as well as an assistant L.A. prosecutor named Michael Guarino, who announced to the press at the time of the trial that the city of L.A. was prosecuting Biafra as a "cost-effective" way to end the specter of obscene rock lyrics. Cost-effective turned out to be just another way to spell cheap, Biafra says, since the prosecutors didn't want to take on the big record producers and their legal staffs, but chose to go after scruffy little Alternative Tentacle Records, Biafra's cottage industry San Francisco company.

From his initial bust, when nine cops came swooping into his house, through the comic process known as jury selection and into Guarino's enraged final argument during which he kept waving the Giger poster in the jury's face, Biafra, although he admits he was usually scared silly, managed to mine his nightmare for all the humor it contained. His impression of a mincing, angry Guarino waving a ballpoint pen in witnesses' faces was worth the price of admission (which included a can of food for the homeless) alone. But the fact that Biafra ended up autographing copies of the record album for the jurors, he says, somehow didn't make up for the year and half of artistic paralysis the trial caused him.

You may go home without a personal fondness for Jello Biafra, but you can't help harboring admiration for his singular stand against the yahoo forces of censorship and artistic oppression. As Biafra keeps reminding us, don't forget Germany, 1933.

Tracking fire breathing

August 1988

SPECTATOR SPOTLIGHT

The Show-Offs Must Go On!

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTOPHER CHASE (2)

Avant Garde performance artist Frank Moore (in wheelchair at left) doesn't like to take no for an answer. When his controversial R-rated show at The Lab in San Francisco was cancelled, Moore decided to literally take it to the streets, in front of the Lab's entrance. "I think it's the nudity in my shows that makes club owwners a little uneasy," explains Frank, tapping out his words on a Ouija Board with a pointer attached to his forehead. "Some people say using nudity is passe, a flashback to the 60's, but I don't agree. It still can have a great deal of shock value and deliver a powerful message if it's used in the right way."

Although sheets of clear plastic kept Moore's troupe from being totally exposed, the display was still an eye-opener. "We attracted the attention of a policeman in the area," according to Frank's wife Linda. "He wondered what we were up to, but when I explained it was a protest against artistic censorship he wished us luck."

—Dave Patrick

NEW TIMES WEEKLY
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VERIFIED
News, Movies, Music, Art, Theater, Airwaves

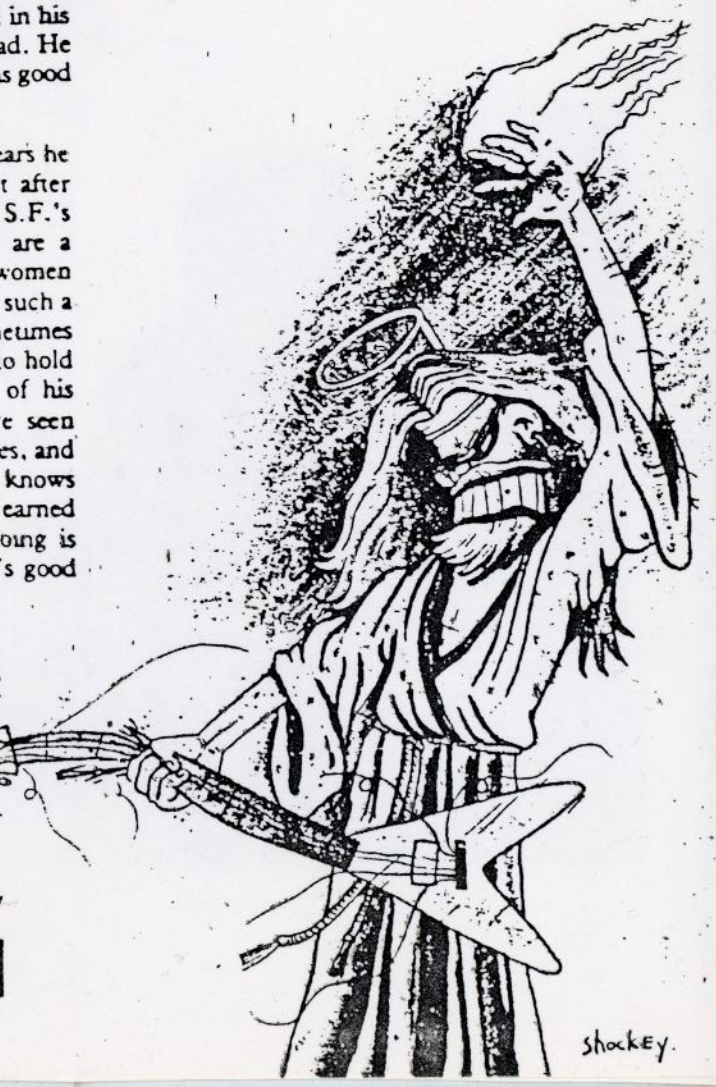
So You Wanna Be a Rock & Roll Star?

by Geza X

Do You Have What It Takes?

I don't honestly know if absolutely anyone can become a rock star if they want it bad enough, but there's a guy in San Francisco, Frank Moore, who is funny-looking and confined to a wheelchair and drools a lot, and he practically leads a religion there. Not only is he quadriplegic, but he is also mute and must communicate by pointing out letters on a Ouija board in his lap with a pointer strapped to his head. He can, however, make guttural noises as good as any rock screamer. For several years he has fronted a band that plays night after night to packed houses in some of S.F.'s biggest clubs. His backup singers are a half-dozen good-looking naked women dressed only in Saran Wrap. He has such a riotous sense of humor that sometimes when he starts laughing, you have to hold him down so he doesn't fall out of his wheelchair and injure himself. I've seen him do Joe Cocker and other parodies, and he's wonderful and hilarious and knows exactly what it's all about and has earned my undying respect. What he's doing is impossible, and he knows it. That's good art, and that's Square Two.

THE MUSIC BIZ NEW



1989

SPECTATOR SPOTLIGHT

Pleased To Meat You!

For more than a decade, performance artist Frank Moore has been establishing new frontiers in theatre and erotica. His "Outrageous Beauty Revue," which served as a Saturday night warmup at the Mabuhay Gardens, San Francisco's infamous punk palace, circa 1978–79, delighted both fringe players and mainstream critics alike.

It's safe to say no one has ever walked away yawning. Screw magazine editor Al Goldstein, normally a pretty outrageous guy himself, begged to be taken to a synagogue after his first taste of Frank Moore. Color slides from a recent performance at Berkeley Square raised more than a few eyebrows when they were dropped off for processing and sent to Kodak: In fact, the Berkeley police even got involved.

"They thought we had photographed a murder ritual," says Linda Mac with a laugh in her voice. "Actually it was just the 'Meat Act' which Frank has been performing for years. At first they didn't believe us, but after a call to Berkeley Square we got everything straightened out."

"Although it was scary at first to have the police knocking on our door, ready to book us on suspicion of murder, we realized they were actually giving us a compliment. It's flattering to think our work is so good it would actually fool the Berkeley police department," adds the wheelchair-bound artist, tapping out his words on a Ouji board, with Linda as his translator.

If you're interested in seeing live theatre that makes the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" look like wholesome, family entertainment, don't miss seeing Frank's "Meat Act" in-the-flesh. His next gig, "A Mayday Ritual," will be held just across the street from the Berkeley police station at the Veteran's Memorial Building. For all the gruesome details, dial (415) 540-0907.

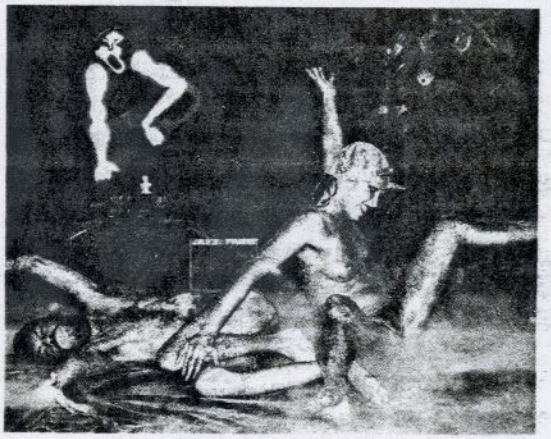
Caption & Photography By Dave Patrick

1987

'Passion Underground' Talent Hunt:

For A Wheel Good Time: In spite of his handicaps, sexy shaman Frank Moore always manages to surround himself with beautiful, naked women.

The Moore, The Merrier!



"What a long, strange trip it's been."

—Grateful Dead, from the song "Truckin'"

"Moore takes advantage of his disadvantage, becoming an unlikely guide to the pleasures of the body."

—C. Carr, *Village Voice*

"I am an exhibitionist. I like having people look at me."

—Frank Moore, cerebral palsy victim/performance artist/shaman

Even for a place like Berkeley, Frank Moore is weird. Perhaps unusual or different are better words to describe the man whom the *East Bay Express* called "hairy and howling, an earthbound Chewbacca on wheels." During the late 1970's, Moore and his gang of erotic explorers, fellow spastics and wild women with a taste of the bizarre were regular performers at the now defunct Mabuhay Gardens, a.k.a. the Fab Mab, which many rock historians regard as the west coast's spawning ground for punk. It's no exaggeration to say even Iggy Pop, Lou Reed and Frank Zappa, who invented onstage psychosis and turned it into art a decade before, would be hard-pressed to top Moore's "Outrageous Beauty Revue," which included nude paraplegics sliding across the stage covered with chocolate, sex-crazed nurses tearing off their uniforms while attacking wheel-chair-ridden patients with enema bags, bare-breasted women in white-face (zombies?) buried under piles of raw meat and entrails, as well as other delights for the demented. In fact, the show was even stranger than it sounds. Frank Moore and company succeeded in casting a spell that was both revolting and hypnotic.

After taking his perverted bank of pranksters on the road (he received rave reviews in New York; if you can make it there, etc.), Frank has returned to the Bay Area where he'll be working on turning a number of far-out fantasies into reality.

In addition to singing with a punk band at Maximum Rock 'n' Roll (924 Gillman St., Berkeley) on Saturday night, September 5, he's also putting together a performance art piece called "Passion Underground," which will debut October 9 at 455 10th St., an avant-garde club in San Francisco. "Even for me, this is something new and different," claims Frank, tapping out his words on a word processor with a pointer attached to his forehead. "I'm hoping to organize a new level of erotic misfits."

Frank and his wife Linda Mack are searching for uninhibited female "...warriors who want to go into the taboo areas, to push beyond where it is comfortable and safe. To explore and build a larger zone of safeness. (We're) open to people who want growth and change for both themselves and society." If you think you're a candidate for their outlandish brand of onstage erotica, give Linda a call at (415) 540-0907. Women only, please!

—Dave Patrick

Frank Moore's *Outrageous Beauty Revue*, cover HP #21, 1983

younger boy-child who massaged her, worshipped her, asked questions about her work; or when in a sporty mood she would call "the swimmer" to come over and play in her indoor heated pool, scented with mineral salts. After hours of water fun, they would make aerobicslike love in the attached sauna. Relaxing after with juices squeezed from fruits imported from Brazil every week was always included in the ritual.

I could go on and on describing this life, but it would only repeat itself because it continued without worry, or inertia, or condoms, or hot flashes, or suppressed desires, or escapist fantasies. It continued without sublimation, or real estate chaos, or parents dying. It continued without misdirected libido or acid rain.

And it has been said that the colors and lights emitting from the princess remained brilliant and bright, forever and ever.

—Linda Montano, Kingston, NY, 1988

Frank Moore

performance artist

A typical night at the Outrageous Beauty Revue would go like this: while outraged and disbelieving punkers rained down hors d'oeuvre popcorn (and the occasional beer bottle) on the performers, a female Elvis impersonator would do her number, followed by a guy in his underpants who hurled himself into a bowl of warm noodles, then into a vat of chocolate pudding. After that, a trio of half-naked white girls writhed out an imitation of the Supremes accompanied by an incompetent rock and roll quartet kachunking out chords. For the grand finale, Moore himself was wheeled out between two female attendants, all clad in sort-of uniforms of the Green Berets. Boxes of dry ice were opened and lit by pulsating strobes as the attendants marched in place, singing "The Ballad of the Green Berets" accompanied by Frank Moore's howls. As the cacophony rose to a crescendo the performers began wrestling each other to the ground, tearing off each other's underclothes. You don't see stuff like that every day.

From *Erotic Play: The Art of Spastic Frank Moore* by Lewis MacAdams, HP #21, 1983.

Statement

Art can be to pacify, to make money, to decorate, to entertain. But I am committed to art as an underground war against fragmentation on all realities. This should be the position of avant-garde art. The goal of this art should be to create alternatives to the fragmented society.

As artists our tools are magic, our bodies, taboos and dreams. We need to be warriors who will go into the areas of taboo, will push beyond where it is comfortable and safe.

In the past 20 years, the calling of art has become the career of art. The passion and idealism became the studying of the trends of what will be "in" next. The passionate vulnerability that creates magic was replaced by a cool and clever intellectualism. We got seduced by high tech... seduced by the modern media, by the quest for large audiences.

Performance is being ruined by trying to package it as off-beat cabaret entertainment. Some performance fits into this slot. But when most performance is forced into neat cabaret format, making performance acceptable and profitable, performance becomes a hip form of nightclub watching, groovy TV watching. Performance is being limited in time and space for acceptability. Performance is in danger of becoming society's lapdog, instead of a magical lab.

Art is the way society dreams, the way society expands its freedom, explores the forbidden in safety. Society needs its dream art, just as an individual needs to dream or go insane. Our fragmented world needs taboo-breaking dreams to get back to freedom. Our society is at a fork in its growth. It can go deeper into high tech impersonal isolation, or it can rediscover the magic that happens when physical and emotional humans actively and directly link up with one another. Art can either just follow society, recording the trends, or it can take a pathfinder role. We artists must not make cynical statements from our inner worlds about how fucked up the rest of society is. We must create alternative community realities in which people can be actively involved.

—Frank Moore, Berkeley, 1988

Hallwalls

Moore's art is out-of-body trip

By RICHARD HUNTINGTON
News Art Critic

American culture has its "official" semi-naked body, a slim, sleek beach-blanket type of body capable of non-stop leaping, flexing and cavorting.

It is a body that looks good leaning against shiny automobiles or zipping along on roller skates or playing beach tag at Malibu. It moves in perfect sync with the rapid cuts of a TV commercial.

Performance artist Frank Moore seems an unlikely candidate to present an alternative view to this all-American body. Born with cerebral palsy and immobile except for his neck muscles, he considers his body the ideal body for a kind of re-education of what bodies are all about.

"My first stroke of good luck was that I was born spastic," he writes. "Unable to walk or talk . . . I have a body that is ideal for a performance artist."

In this condition, with no pressures to be good at anything, he can be an exhibitionist without the usual social liabilities. He sees himself as a "deformed medicine man," a shaman-therapist who acts as a guide for the less uninhibited.

Now 42, Moore has been doing long ritualistic pieces — some up to 48 hours long — and various kinds of experimental theater, since the early '70s. In New York in the '70s, he started something called The Theater of Human Melting. Currently living in Berkeley, he runs a bimonthly series of performances.

Friday night at Hallwalls, Moore presented "Journey to Lila," a performance described as a voyage "through inner space and inner time to Lila, the island of play and illusion in the sea of how-things-should be."

That's the question: how *should* things be? At the performance — in its early stages at least — things were a bit embarrassing. Embarrassing, that is, for anyone who remembers the commandment that goes: Thou shalt not be caught dead in an audience participation event, especially if it has "mythic" overtones.

Moore's soft-talking crew tried to soothe everyone but things seemed designed to bring the blood throbbing to the temples. Everyone waited in a curtained anteroom, while Linda Mac, Moore's wife, read an exchange of letters between Moore and the editor of High Performance Magazine. The letters were about erotic art, but Mac read them with all the emotion of an NFTA conductor warning everyone not to eat, drink or play radios on the trains.

A "mid priest" with a multicolor face appeared and selected two people. (Two! You didn't even have safety in numbers!) In another little curtained room you were requested to read a text on the revelations of a man named Carlos. It was about death and dying and freedom.

Then ineffectively blindfolded, we were led to a central room and met there by a woman in a picturesquely torn outfit that looked like it was designed for Raquel Welch's last caveman movie.

The woman — who turns out to be Mac in a luminous blue wig — then ushered us into the inner sanctum, "The Cave of Lila," admonishing us on the way not to tell what we experience there. Inside we are asked to kneel and, as we do, become vaguely aware of Moore spread out on his back. Another woman, Leigh, snuggles her close-shaved head against Moore's body, all the time her hands reaching out and touching ours with gentle, consoling movements.

Frank Moore says he has the perfect body for a performance artist.

After a few minutes Mac returns and takes us back to the large room, which without blindfolds, looks very much like a tacky Middle East harem room. Large speakers carry Moore's groans and yowls from the "cave."

But then real-time intruded: a reviewer is stuck with deadlines. This is a disadvantage. One senses that this was all a kind of warm-up. The beginning of a performances, Moore has often explained, is a kind of clearing away period in which ordinary thoughts, reactions and — the key word — inhibitions are dispelled. Embarrassment, so the theory goes, would eventually fade away. But a reviewer, armed with his handy deadline rationale, can run out and never know.

SCORE REVIEW 6

ON FRANK MOORE'S PERFORMANCE AT THE LAB, 7-23-'88

This was a night for statement. An artist had been locked out. Because he was too old-fashioned? But why were ninety-percent of the people passing by Frank Moore's performance outside The Lab reacting as if they have never seen any of this before? Who is the audience? Other artists? Art hobbyists? An initiated elite? He was too old-fashioned for whom? Too avant-garde for whom? Too famous for whom? The fact was the performance of Frank Moore's group (and others whom I will mention shortly) shredded the boundaries of what one does in public, what one does on the street. They were dressed in tights and sweat-clothes with holes cut in them for easy access while skin-drumming. Who does this business-as-usual? There was touch, sound, and sight (for all you addicts of visual stimulous, the performers were painted and/or wore painted clothing), but it was not an everyday touch or sound or sight; it was an intimate touch, an ecstatic sound (a harmonic pitch almost sexual, but something even more satisfying), a welcome sight. The overall effect of Moore's group was a breaking down of separation, a drawing together. Those who were courageous enough to be present, to stay present, became equal with everyone else, not one, yet closer. Who cares if it's "art"?It was genuine. At its best it far transcended aesthetic pretensions and all that flapdoodle. I might call it spiritual if that word weren't so smudged. It activated parts of personal humanity that usually lie dormant, ignored, discouraged, and repressed. Frank Moore's performance might have been cancelled by this venue, but that was only yet another obstacle for Moore to leap. If you know anything about him, as a victim of cerebal palsy, you are amazed at his leaps. If you're not, let this quote from the Village Voice serve as an introduction: "In performance, Moore takes advantage of his disadvantage, becoming an unlikely guide into the pleasures of the body, taking audiences places they would probably never go without the example of his vulnerability and trust....that Moore would be the one urging us to stay connected with our physical selves is both ironic and poetic...."

Also appearing on the bill (on the street) were The Outpatients, Jack and Adelle Foley, and Jesse Beagle . The Outpatients protested with a picket march, chanting "All we are saying is give brains a chance," and a roll-call of lobotomies with an extra emphasis on "art-scene lobotomy." They topped off their appearance with an energetic version of "Mennonite Surf Party," which included a searing Rock-and-Roll riff on classical guitar by Tom Hamill.

Jack Foley, appropriately, read his poem "Nightmare," which is dedicated to the man who tackled him as he read his poetry in a San Francisco gallery. He too knows the thoughtless knocks, the censorship, of an often selfish art world. He also read a chorus or two with Adelle Foley, keeping the street charged with energy.

Jesse Beagle also contributed appropriately to the demonstration/performance. She sang a couple of songs with the spirit, the spunk, of protest, and read a trenchant commentary on Frank Moore's Cafe Milano (Berkeley) performance. In effect, she berated the cafe-goers for their passivity: they only became interested in Moore's performance when they heard the moaning sounds, and, taking two stairs at a time, only then did they try to peek.

All in all, these people responded strongly, cohesively, to the lockout of Moore. Frank Moore came to do what he had been invited to do (before The Lab cancelled for spurious reasons--they were rude to boot), but on this occasion, on Divasadero, it seemed to have an extra charge. The Lab missed out, but fortunately many people on the street did not.

CRAG HILL

SCORE REVIEW is a forum for ideas on books, performances, elections, and what not. It appears when it has something to appear with--contributions are welcome and needed. Address: 491 Mandana Blvd. #3, Oakland, Ca. 94610

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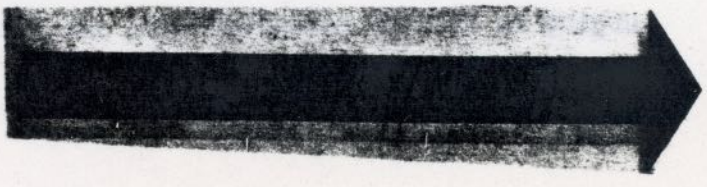

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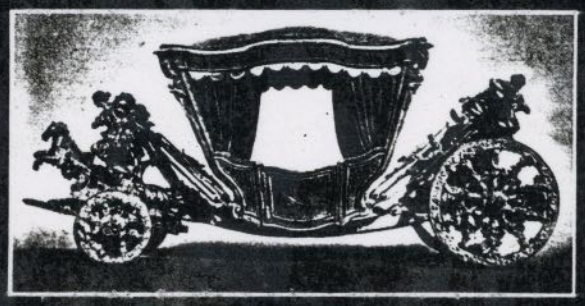

PERFORMANCE PROJECT

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EXPERIMENTS IN MAGICAL CHANGE

Frank Moore

WHAT I AM

BEING IN A NON-NORMAL BODY HAS MADE IT CLEAR TO ME THAT LIFE CAN BE SEEN AS PERFORMANCE. MY BODY AND MY ATTITUDES TOWARD LIFE BREAK TABOOS AND CHANGE THINGS EVEN BY MY JUST SITTING IN A FANCY RESTAURANT. A SEXY WOMAN (MY WIFE, LINDA) IS FEEDING ME, LAUGHING, HAVING A GOOD TIME. PEAS AND BEETS AND MASHED POTATOES ARE RUNNING DOWN MY MATTED BEARD. FOR ME AND LINDA, IT IS JUST EVERYDAY LIFE. BUT FOR THE UP-TIGHT, HIGH-CLASS SOCIETY LADY AT THE NEXT TABLE, IT IS A TERRIBLY GROSS, DISGUSTING ATTACK ON HER NEAT CLEAN REALITY. I COUGH, LOUD AND LONG. A KNIFE CUTS THE NORMAL WORLD. A YOUNG HOMELY GIRL AT ANOTHER TABLE THINKS, "IF HE CAN HAVE FUN, WHY CAN'T I?"

I BECAME SUCKED INTO PERFORMANCE NOT TO TELL STORIES, NOT TO PAINT PICTURES FOR OTHERS TO LOOK AT, NOT EVEN TO REVEAL SOMETHING ABOUT MYSELF OR ABOUT THE STATE OF THINGS, AND CERTAINLY NOT FOR FAME OR FORTUNE. IT WAS SIMPLY THE BEST WAY THAT I SAW TO CREATE THE INTIMATE COMMUNITY WHICH I, AS A PERSON, NEEDED AND WHICH I THOUGHT SOCIETY NEEDED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PERSONAL ISOLATION...

I AM NOT T.V. I AM NOT THE SHOW. ART SHOULD NOT BE A SHOW. THERE ARE A MILLION SHOWS FROM T.V., MOVIES, SCHOOL, SPORTS, MUSIC, THEATER, THE STOCK MARKET TO THE NEWS AND POLITICS...ALL WITH THE ILLUSION OF PARTICIPATION, BUT WITH THE REALITY OF GRAND PASSIVITY AND SHORT ATTENTION SPANS.

I DO NOT FUNCTION ALL THAT WELL IN THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, CASUAL, SEXUAL, ECONOMICAL, COMPETITIVE WORLD. SO I LOOK TO PERFORMANCE TO CREATE A WORLD OF COMMUNITY, INTIMACY, AND HUMAN INTERACTION. FOR ME, ART IS A MATTER OF SURVIVAL.

WHAT I DO

I HAD BEEN PAINTING OILS FOR YEARS, PAINTING WITH A BRUSH STRAPPED TO MY FOREHEAD, PAINTING NUDES FROM MAGAZINE PHOTOS. ONE DAY, A RICH WOMAN ASKED ME TO PAINT A NUDE OF HER. MY WIFE SET ME UP IN THE FANCY

Photo: Annie Sprinkle

LIVING ROOM WITH PAINTS AS THE WOMAN UNDRESSED. ON THAT DAY I REALIZED HOW ART CAN GIVE PEOPLE PERMISSION TO DO WHAT NORMALLY IS FORBIDDEN. IT GIVES A FRAME THAT SWITCHES REALITIES FROM THE NARROW NORMAL REALITY TO THE FREEING ALTERED REALITY OF CONTROLLED FOLLY.

I WAS ON THE CENTER PLAZA "SELLING NEWSPAPERS." BUT SELLING PAPERS WAS ONLY AN EXCUSE, AN EXCUSE FOR WATCHING PEOPLE, TALKING TO PEOPLE WHO HAD THE SLOWNESS AND THE INSIGHTFUL CURIOSITY TO STOP AND TALK...A WAY FOR ME TO ASK THEM TO MODEL FOR ME. THESE SPECIAL PEOPLE WERE MY REAL TARGETS FOR MY STREET PIECES. THEY SAW PAST THE MASK OF THE CRIPPLE. THE MASSES USE THE MASK OF THE CRIPPLE TO RELIEVE THEIR GUILT, TO REINFORCE THEIR FRAGILE SUPERIORITY OF BEING "NORMAL," TO MAKE THEMSELVES FEEL BETTER BY THROWING MONEY (UP TO $20 A THROW) AT THE LESS FORTUNATE AT WHOM THEY WILL NOT EVEN LOOK. THE THIRD TYPE OF PERSON WAS MADE UP OF THE POOR AND THE KIDS WHO GAVE MONEY AS A PURE SPIRITUAL ACT.

THE NEWSPAPER SELLING QUICKLY FELL AWAY. ALL I HAD TO DO IS SIT THERE ON THE SIDEWALK, BEING AVAILABLE TO TALK. IT DID NOT MATTER THAT I DRESSED FANCY, OR HAD A SIGN SAYING "I DON'T WANT MONEY; I WANT YOU."

I NOTICED THE CHANGES IN THE PEOPLE WHEN THEY TOOK OFF THEIR CLOTHES; HOW THEY RELAXED, HOW THEY STARTED TALKING ON A DEEPER LEVEL ABOUT IMPORTANT PERSONAL THINGS. I STARTED DOING PRIVATE PERFORMANCES THAT INVOLVED DIRECT INTER-PERSONAL ACTING OUT OF EROTIC DREAMS. I STOPPED PAINTING BECAUSE IT BECAME TOO STATIC.

THESE PRIVATE PERFORMANCES BECAME THE BACKBONE OF WHAT I DO. WHAT THE PUBLIC COMES TO SEE, WHAT IS USUALLY THOUGHT OF AS "THE PERFORMANCE," IS IN REALITY ONLY THE TIP OF THE MONSTER, THE MAGIC, THE WORK, THE VISION THAT IS CONTROLLING ME AS AN ARTIST.

I DO NOT SEE THE PERFORMANCE AS MY OWN. MANY ARTISTS GET OVERWHELMED BY TAKING ON THE WHOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF PERFORMANCE, BY THINKING THE PERFORMANCE IS THEMSELVES. THEY GET PUMPED UP WHEN A PIECE SUCCEEDS, AND THEY GET CRUSHED WHEN A PIECE BOMBS. THEY GET BOXED IN BY FEAR OF FAILING, BLOCKED FROM EXPERIMENTING. IT IS SIMILAR TO THE SPIRITUAL HEALER WHO FORGETS THAT HE IS NOT THE ONE WHO IS ACTUALLY DOING THE HEALING. THE MAGIC USUALLY LEAVES HIM.

THERE ARE MANY UNKNOWN AND UNSEEN FORCES AT WORK IN A PERFORMANCE. FRANK MOORE, THE PERFORMANCE ARTIST, IS IN REALITY A FICTITIOUS FRONT MAN FOR PERSONALITIES AND FORCES THAT REALLY CREATE PERFORMANCES.

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[lysistrata] ONE REHEARSAL NIGHT I DECIDED WE NEEDED AN AUDIENCE, SO I TOOK US TO THE BERKELEY UA MOVIE THEATER WHICH HAS A GREAT OUTSIDE FOYER. THERE WERE LONG LINES FOR FOUR MOVIES. THERE WE REHEARSED. AS THE WOMAN IN THE CAFE SIX YEARS LATER DESCRIBED IT, THESE PEOPLE WERE TALKING FUNNY, IN GREEK STYLE OBSCENITY...PRETTY GIRLS HUMPING GUYS IN WHEELCHAIRS RIGHT NEXT TO THE MOVIE LINES. THIS WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF THE DISABLED HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT... WE CRIPS HAD SAT IN AT THE SAN FRANCISCO FEDERAL BUILDING FOR A MONTH, BLOCKED BUSES, PICKETED JANE FONDA'S MOVIE, coming home...THIS WOMAN WAS AWARE OF ALL OF THIS...THEN SHE COMES TO A MOVIE (SHE CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS) AND SHE SEES WOMEN AND CRIPS DOING STRANGE, OBSCENE THINGS. SHE SAID FOR HER, THE PIECE MADE THE DISABLED MOVEMENT MORE HUMAN AND ADDED HUMOR TO IT.

Photo: D. Patrick. "The Outrageous Beauty Revue," 1980.

WHAT IMPRESSED ME ABOUT THE WOMAN IN THE COFFEEHOUSE IS THAT SHE REMEMBERED FIVE MINUTES OF OBSCENE SILLINESS AFTER SIX YEARS.

THE SHOW WAS IN BAD TASTE, WAS CALLED "EXPLOITATIVE." WHAT MADE IT THUS WAS NOT JUST WHAT WAS DONE, BUT WHO WAS DOING IT...CRIPS, WOMEN AND OTHER "UNTALENTED" UNFORTUNATES. THE FIRST ASSUMPTION OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE OFFENDED WAS THAT THESE WERE ABLE-BODIED ACTORS MAKING FUN OF CRIPS; THEN, WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR WE WERE REAL CRIPS, THE LEAP INTO DUMBNESS WAS THAT SOMEONE WAS EXPLOITING US. WHEN THEY GOT IT INTO THEIR HEADS THAT WE HAD CREATED OUR OWN ACTS, THE NEW WAY TO DENY OUR POWER WAS TO SAY WE WERE EXPLOITING OUR OWN BODIES. FORGET NUDITY. FORGET BEING SEXUAL. JUST BY GETTING UP ONTO THE STAGE WE WERE EXPLOITING OUR OWN BODIES.

AN IMPORTANT CHARACTER: DOTTY. SHE WAS CREATED WHEN AN ACTRESS JUST COULD NOT REMEMBER HER LINES, CUES, OR ANYTHING. FINALLY, I MADE HER A MENTALLY RETARDED FREE SPIRIT, WANDERING AROUND IN SLOW MOTION WHEREVER SHE PLEASED, DOING WHATEVER SHE PLEASED. DOTTY (PLAYED BY DIFFERENT PEOPLE), HAS BEEN CLIMBING OVER MY AUDIENCES EVER SINCE, PLAYING WITH THEM.

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the outrageous beauty revue LOOKED LIKE TACKY ENTERTAINMENT PERFORMED BY UNTRAINED PEOPLE JUST FOR FUN. THIS WAS HOW MY CAST ALSO THOUGHT OF IT AND OF THEMSELVES. ONE OF MY MAJOR FAILINGS WAS THAT I DIDN'T PASS ON THE DEEPER PURPOSES, MAGICAL

INFLUENCES, AND HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF OUR PERFORMANCE WORK.

THE TACKY, WILDLY COLORFUL, LOUD SHOW OF BAD TASTE WAS REALLY A COVER, A DISTRACTION OF THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION, SO THAT THE HIDDEN MAGICAL TRANCE COULD TAKE THEM OVER. A TRANCE CAN BE CAST BY SHOWING THEM SOMETHING OUT OF THEIR REALITY. LITTLE KIDS OFTEN BECOME FROZEN ON THE SPOT WHEN THEY SEE ME, MY SPECIAL BODY, IN A CAFE. WE JUST GREATLY MAGNIFIED THIS TRANCE PROCESS IN THE SHOW BY THROWING OUT MANY OF THESE TRANCE INDUCING IMAGES OF TABOOS, OF CRIP ROCKSTAR, OF PREGNANT NUDES, OF SILLY SEX AND VIOLENCE. THEN THE REAL SHOW HAPPENED WITHIN THIS INNER TRANCE.

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THE HEART OF THE WORKSHOP WAS demanding IN VARIOUS FORMS. THE ONLY THINGS OUT OF BOUNDS BOTH IN THE WORKSHOP AND IN THE GROUP WERE ACTUAL SEX BETWEEN NON-MATES AND HARMING VIOLENCE. THIS CREATED A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH PEOPLE COULD ALLOW ONE ANOTHER TO TRUST, TO BE DEMANDED OF. IN THE WORKSHOP, I PICKED A PERSON TO MAKE A DEMAND EITHER ON A PARTICULAR PERSON, ON WHOMEVER HE PICKED, OR ON THE WHOLE GROUP. THE DEMANDED ONE MUST SATISFY THE DEMANDER. THE DEMANDER MUST STAY WITH THE DEMAND UNTIL HE IS TRULY AND FULLY SATISFIED. THIS PUTS BOTH THE DEMANDER AND THE DEMANDED UNDER PRESSURE OF HONESTY AND VULNERABILITY.

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I RETURNED TO THE SMALL CHANNELS, AS OPPOSED TO THE MASS CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION. WHILE MY INTIMATE COMMUNAL FAMILY WAS STILL THE BASE OF MY ART, ONLY LINDA AND I DID THE PERFORMANCE WORK. I WENT BACK TO THE PRIVATE PERFORMANCES TO CREATE A SPECIAL LANGUAGE FOR THE ALTERED REALITY OF PHYSICAL TRANCE.

I WAS HAPPY WITH THIS SMALLNESS. AFTER EVERY PIECE, LINDA AND I WOULD WALK HOME, TALKING ABOUT WHAT AMAZING THINGS HAPPENED, WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DID NOT, WHO CAME. FROM THE OUTSIDE, IT LOOKED LIKE NOTHING WAS HAPPENING. BUT IN THESE SMALL EVENTS, I EXPLORED THE TRANCE — INDUCING GESTURES OF ROCKING, OF WRAPPING BODIES...I CANNOT LIST ALL OF THESE DISCOVERIES OF SMALLNESS.

ANOTHER TOOL I DISCOVERED IN THESE PROLONGED SPELLS IS TO HIDE THE POWERFUL EROTIC RITUALS FROM THE

PILGRIM AUDIENCE BY PERFORMING THEM INSIDE A LOCKED BOX, HIDDEN CAVE, OR SECRET TENT.

MORE THAN EVER, MY PUBLIC PERFORMANCES ARE JUST FRAGMENTS OF A LARGER PERFORMANCE. THE MAIN FORM THAT THE PUBLIC PIECES TAKE IS LONG RITUALS WHICH CREATE A TEMPORARY PHYSICAL COMMUNITY BY USING PHYSICAL TRANCE. THE SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY HAS LED ME TO SET UP A SHAMANISTIC PERFORMANCE SCHOOL, the university of possibilities. THE FOCUS OF THIS SCHOOL IS TO CREATE A MYTHIC LIFE.

WHAT I THINK

IN A LOT OF PERFORMANCES I SPEND THE FIRST HOUR BORING PEOPLE, USUALLY BY ASKING WHAT EACH PERSON DOES, HOW DID HE HEAR ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE, ETC. I DRIVE IN MY WHEELCHAIR UP TO EACH PERSON AND TAP OUT THESE QUESTIONS SLOWLY ON MY LETTERBOARD. TALKING TO THIS STRANGE PERSON IN THIS STRANGE WAY MAY BE INTERESTING AS A CONFRONTATION. BUT LISTENING TO TRIVIAL CHATTER BETWEEN THIS DISABLED MAN AND EACH PERSON IN THIS "PAINFULLY SLOW" WAY CAN BECOME AN ACTIVE BOREDOM IN A ROOM WHICH LOOKS AS IF NOTHING ELSE WILL EVER HAPPEN. THIS ACTIVE BOREDOM IS A SLOW INCREASING SHOCK THAT MAKES PEOPLE WHO WANT QUICK-PACED, HIGH-ENERGY ENTERTAINMENT SUDDENLY BOLT OUT OF THE DOOR.

IT TOOK ME A COUPLE OF YEARS TO REALIZE THAT PEOPLE WILL NOT DO WHAT THEY CANNOT HANDLE; SO THERE IS NO REASON TO SHIELD THEM, MOREOVER, THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO HANDLE SLEAZY PEOPLE. BORING THEM IS ONE WAY. THERE ARE OTHER WAYS.

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ONE NIGHT I STUPIDLY LEFT A PIECE OF CARPET ON A PART OF THE FLOOR. THE REAL AUDIENCE CROWDED ONTO THE CARPET, LEAVING THE ACTORS THE BARE FLOOR. SO THAT NIGHT, THE AUDIENCE WATCHED FROM THE RUG A BORING RITUAL...BORING BECAUSE THERE WAS NO MAGICAL PARTICIPATION BY THE AUDIENCE. I LEARNED THE HARD WAY THAT EVERYTHING IN THE PERFORMANCE REALITY IS IMPORTANT, EVEN A RUG.

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THERE ARE PARTS WHICH COULD CHANGE THE WHOLE NIGHT DEPENDING ON HOW THEY ARE DONE. FOR EXAMPLE WHEN EACH PERSON, ONE BY ONE, PUT HIS CLOTHES BACK ON AND

DESCRIBED EACH ITEM. THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF DOING THIS. WHEN THE FIRST "REAL" PERSON SAID: "THIS IS MY RED SOCK," I KNEW THE PIECE WOULD BE SHORT AND SHALLOW, BECAUSE ALL THE AUDIENCE MEMBERS WOULD FOLLOW THE SHORT PATTERN. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FIRST PERSON SAID: "THIS IS THE SLIME GREEN SHIRT THAT BOBBIE LEFT WHEN WE BROKE UP...," I KNEW WE WOULD BE THERE FOR HOURS BECAUSE EACH PERSON WOULD BARE HIS SOUL. I LEARNED HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT FIRST PERSON, SOMEONE WHO WAS SENSITIVE.

•

THERE WAS TREMENDOUS PRESSURE ON ME TO POLISH THE SHOW UP TO MAKE IT MORE SELLABLE, MORE ENTERTAINING. THIS PRESSURE DID NOT JUST COME FROM THE CRITICS, BUT ALSO FROM FRIENDS AND CAST MEMBERS. "ADD RIMSHOTS, TIGHTEN IT UP. THEN THE SHOW WILL BE A COMMERCIAL SUCCESS." "WE SHOULD REHEARSE MORE, THEN WE WOULD BE GOOD THEATER, GOOD MUSIC." BUT THE VISION IS NOT ABOUT COMMERCIAL SUCCESS, NOR REACHING A LOT OF PEOPLE, NOR ABOUT GOOD ENTERTAINMENT, NOR ART. THE VISION IS TO CREATE TRANCES AND REALITIES WHICH WILL BRING CHANGE. THIS IS MY VISION. THE VISION HAS ME. I AM ITS TOOL. IF I HAD NOT STAYED WITHIN THE VISION, I WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST WITHIN THE ARTISTIC PRESSURES. ART SHOULD BE A VISION QUEST.

ON THE NIGHTS THAT THE ACTORS DIDN'T CREATE THE REALISM, I WOULD STOP THE PLAY, GIVE THE AUDIENCE THEIR MONEY BACK, AND INVITE THEM TO RETURN THE NEXT NIGHT. THEY DID. I AM RUTHLESS IN PURSUING THE INNER QUALITY I SEEK IN PEOPLE.

I NEVER CANCELLED ANY OF THESE PERFORMANCES BECAUSE TOO FEW PEOPLE CAME. IT WAS A LAB WHERE NEW MODULES COULD BE BORN, WHERE MAGICAL ENERGY COULD BE RELEASED.

•

PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASK, "WHERE IS YOUR WORK HEADING? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO NEXT?" IT IS NOT MY WORK. IT IS NOT MY CHOICE. IT IS A GROWING, EVOLVING VISION. A PERFORMANCE DOES NOT HAVE A BEGINNING OR AN END. IT BRAIDS AROUND ITSELF, FLOWING ON. ONE THING'S FOR SURE. WE HUMANS ARE NOT THE END OF EVOLUTION.

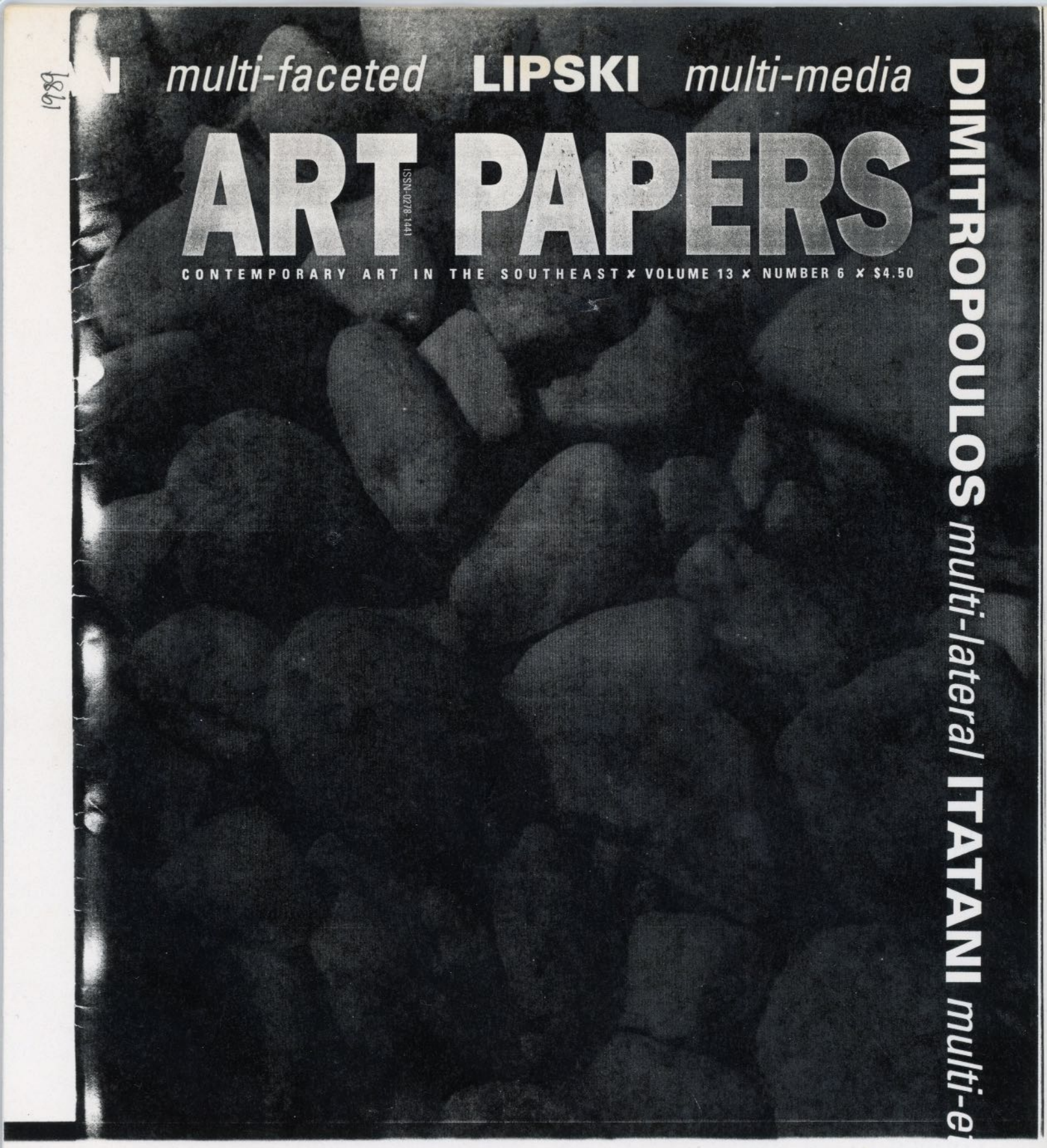
LA DEE DA

BY BELISSA COHEN

LA WEEKLY MARCH 24-30, 1989

NUDE DIMENSIONS IN PAINTING: We remember Berkeley-based performance artist **Frank Moore** and wife **Linda Mac** from our college days, when the pair earned a reputation the length of Telegraph Avenue for recruiting young and pretty college students for their naked videos and performance pieces. Score 'em one for consistency: Frank and Linda's show Saturday night at **Al's Bar** featured, as usual, lots of topless dancers and the "hippie love consciousness" with which Frank, confined to a wheelchair with cerebral palsy, infects the crowd. This particular performance required the assistance of an audience plant, and former **Anti-Club** partner **Russell Jessum** had agreed to be the stooge. Anyone who knows Russell, however, knows he's a perpetual Larry Latestuff, and Al's booker **Jack Marquette** had to stand in for the tardy Mr. Jessum — dressed in chicken and lasagna. You know, performance art. According to bar owner **Mark "Al" Kriesel**, this was the first time he'd ever seen the guys playing pool stop to check out the action onstage.

1989



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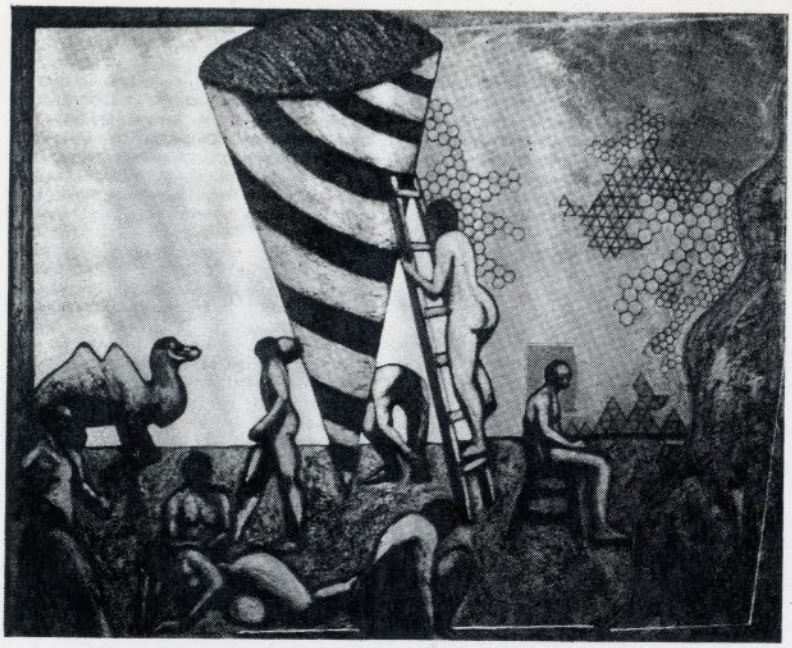


Laurel Robinson, *Waiting For Parts*, oil on canvas, 54" x 66" (photo courtesy of the artist).

the process of communication. The multitude of references within each canvas reflects the world-wide scope of this artist's curiosity. Each piece makes it apparent that Robinson continues to study in a chosen area of interest, which just happens to be the tiny speck of dust we inhabit. Her studies have included such diverse disciplines as mathematics, oceanography, and languages. It is in her painting that she is able to juggle all the facets of her investigations and bring them together. That Robinson is compulsively inquisitive about our planet is evident within the framework of each piece, but the work also reflects her concern about the position that the human species occupies within the earth's ecosystem.

There are references in all of the pieces to classical western interpretations of landscape. Robinson gives these references to the viewer in two formats. In one scheme, the landscape operates almost like a stage backdrop for the activity, while in the other format, the landscape sits in front of other elements, and is projected in a newsreel or contact sheet format that reads almost as the documentation of a traveler's tour of a remote desert region. Indeed, the contact sheets all refer to arid regions, while the backdrops focus on water—pristine falls and babbling streams. These landscapes contextualize the symbolic elements in the paintings which are arranged in opposition to various other imagery.

And these juxtaposed elements are just that—elemental. They are chemical diagrams, meteorites, and silhouetted animal shapes in rich, jewel-like, primary color. They float over the canvas surface and butt up against the atmosphere and terrestrial images, creating a play of visual patterns and painterly tensions.

It is interesting to note that where there is reference to human form and activity, it is most often depicted in a black, white, and gray format. While animal, chemical, and geometric images are allowed to float and tumble freely about, the human references adhere strictly to the laws of gravity and physics. They are weighty, faceless monoliths that partake in seemingly futile human activity. They provide a sobering impression that counters the intensely saturated chroma of the diagrams.

Symbols are plentiful within these compositions. There are ladders for climbing, black and white buoys that bob in both water and eroded, rocky terrain. There are spirals of life cycles, and even the chemical diagrams created on cathode ray screens by video games. Animal forms not only are silhouetted, but are encircled, even as they would appear within the scope of an automatic weapon; some are literally targeted within concentric circles.

All of this speaks to the interaction of the human race with its environment, and to our position within that context. This is brought home completely in Robinson's penchant for thoroughness, by the symbolism apparent in even the manner in which she has framed these paintings. She wraps them in material that litters our environment, that doesn't decompose, the very substance of which automobile tires and bumpers are fabricated. All of this implores us to consider what our role is in this world and how that relates to and affects the rest of the creatures with whom we share this planet.

Robinson manipulates recognizable symbols that cross cultural lines and language barriers and can be read and experienced by people of diverse backgrounds. These are global issues that unite all cultures and nations. Robinson uses mass communication methods to address issues of how cultures interrelate.

In *Waiting for Parts*, her most spare painting, she addresses these global issues and also discusses the process of the flow of informative ideas and issues. By incorporating relatively few images, this piece speaks the most succinctly about issues of ecology, pointless human activity and its destructive interference with that ecology, and the process of exchanging information: an exchange, or lack thereof, among the elements and figures within the structure of the canvas, or among artist, image, and viewer. The figures in this canvas neither speak nor interact; they are faceless and without personality. They go about work within separate spheres, while the elemental diagrams are assigned space apart from their activity. Interaction becomes much more possible with the viewer than it is among the components within the frame.

Perhaps other pieces in the exhibit could benefit from the restraint of *Waiting for Parts*. But thoroughness seems to be Robinson's intent, and in forcing the viewer to stop and think for a while, she cannot be faulted. Robinson is juggling her concern for the environment, for humanity, and for thorough, effective communication. She is, in this exhibit and particularly in this one painting, achieving that very tenuous and delicate balance.

Marty Mitchell

Marty Mitchell is an artist and a member of the art faculty at Fairmont State College, Fairmont, West Virginia.

x

Annie Sprinkle

The Harmony Theater
June 15 - 17, 1989
The Kitchen
January 17 - 23, 1990
New York, New York

The Harmony Theatre, on a side street in the Village, is usually the venue for strippers. But for four nights in June it was the site of a new art movement, one that will probably not take hold for several more years (if not a decade or two), having to break through the gloomy pessimistic view of the last fifteen years in the performance world. This talk about a new art movement would seem dangerous and pretentious in a review about a "sexually" explicit show. But it is the artist and her peers who put the show into this lofty context. As we leafed through the program before the show, we came across a manifesto. Manifestoes are often signs of artists who are taking themselves too seriously, choking on their own imagined self-importance. So it is a sign of a boring evening ahead if the artist hands you a manifesto before you see the work.

But this manifesto is different. It talks about an art movement which "celebrates sex as the nourishing, life-giving force" which these artists use, in the self-empowering "attitude of sex-positivism" to "communicate our ideas and emotions...to have fun, heal the world, and endure." This is a declaration of war on the anti-art, anti-human, anti-sex, anti-fun, anti-love, and truly anti-life censoring forces of darkness in power in the world today. This document was signed by some of the leading artists who use sex in their work. These artists call themselves "post porn modernists," which is very limiting because it links them not only to dying, deadening porn, but to the glum postmodern art movement, setting themselves up to be just a reaction, just the limb of a dead tree. They need a name like "living pleasure artists."

This is also my main criticism of the show itself. It was called "Annie Sprinkle—Post Porn Modernist." The work was more than that because Annie is more than that. The stage set was Annie's bedroom, Annie's world. But Annie's bedroom world was not limited to the stage, not to a private bedroom, not to a private booth with a one-way window in a triple-X theatre. This is because Annie has been expanding out of the world of massage parlors, strip joints, and porn screens, and into the world of art and spirit. So the bedroom on stage keeps changing, pulling us in, including us. We were never sure what we were experiencing—a play, a one-woman sex

The Annie Sprinkle Flashing Finger Puppet
Cut along dotted line, insert fingers and wiggle. For best results, cross your fingers, then spread them apart to make Annie Flash.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

show, a performance with audience participation, a monologue, or a magic tantric ritual. This not-being-sure created an electric reality which wrapped us into Annie...deep inside Annie Sprinkle.

When we first saw Annie, she was like a corporate yuppie explaining to us with the help of charts, graphs, and slides, why the sex business was a great move for our young Annie. This seemed very similar to the whitewash rationale of the porn business. But just as we were about to dismiss Annie, it became clear that this was not a self-justifying monologue about the inner world of a sex star written by some male ghost-writer. It was much more. For anyone who has followed Annie's career (and for those who have not, the biographic thread in this piece provided the needed background), the show was the logical next step. She is someone whose spirit has reached out of sleazy hard-core flicks to inspire by humor and human warmth. Teamed up with Veronica Vera, sister sex-evolutionist and author of the manifesto, they claimed control over their sex art by publishing their explicit magazines and selling bottles of their own piss by mail. Annie's "innocence" has a wide streak of clever business sense. She has gone on to become a writer and a photographer, as well as a director of an erotic video. Over the last six years, she has segued herself into the performance art world to the point that she is the subject of much serious critical discussion. Many sections of the current piece have been performed before as individual pieces. Done separately, they might have been cute and daring, but would have lacked a certain depth of magical insight. But in this production, Annie weaves the pieces with new creations into a nonlinear magic carpet that breaks breaking, into the cosmic realm of personal touch, where by laughing, crying, and being turned on, we became channels for new alternatives.

It was billed as a one-woman show, but in fact the audience was her leading man/woman. She talked to us, involved us, and enveloped us. The play vanished, and an experience took over. She had us doing tantric breathing and exercising our inner genital muscles. It felt silly, tacky, and dumb, as Annie appeared to be, but also dumbly innocent and pure. But as shamans will tell you, magic is dumb, tacky, silly, innocent, and pure. Annie, at different points, invited the audience onto the stage to play with her universal tits, peer into her deeply to glimpse her pink clam cervix. She was always talking to us, responding to us, making love to us, pulling us into an enveloping reality that kept getting deeper and wider...first the porn reality, expanding into Annie's reality, and finally into the liquid world of melting forms of tantric magic.

The play melted away. Annie became more than herself, more than her Sprinkle identity. She talked about her reality, but not just about herself. By transforming into a symbol of what we all could be, she was offering a working alternative to the normal world. This melting away of the play expanded the performance into an all-enveloping environmental experience: a magical ritual. If Annie is tempted to polish up her act, to package it, to stick to the rehearsed script, she will lose the power of the soft magic that comes through her body and personality. In the slide show, one slide revealed Annie Sprinkle before, as a self-creation of a shy, awkward, fat, Jewish girl named Ellen from nowhere, U.S.A. But Sprinkle didn't stop at biographic monologues, which can be self-indulgent. She quickly included before and after pictures of average women transformed right before our eyes into sex goddesses. Some were professional strippers and sex queens. But a lot of them were housewives, nurses, and artists whom Annie and Vera had transformed into their secret, hidden selves. The clear message was that this self-creation/self-transformation is possible for anyone.

Still, a nagging feeling remained that all of this was too neat, too nice, too many rationalizations of a porno victim who denied all the pain said most of her experiences in the sex business had been good, but then she took us on a nightmarish journey through all the sweaty, dirty hurt, sucking rubber cocks faster and deeper with bodiless angry male voices screaming at her about cunts and bitches. We then knew that Annie Sprinkle was a great actor, willing to be absolutely vulnerable, honest, and real, both physically and emotionally, and able to channel this vision.

Then we watched Annie quietly transmute all of this negativity into personal strength. She grew, expanded, and became a shaman, ready to perform the final ritual: the holy orgasm. Suddenly, we were in the primal cave, the sex temple, with our dead friends, many dead of AIDS, watching something sacred. As her orgasm rose, her magical presence expanded to embrace everyone in the theatre. I left the Harmony warm, satisfied, and happy. For an encore Annie invited members of the audience to pose for a polaroid with her tits on their head—five bucks a shot. Every shaman knows that you should not leave people in the ozone.

So we are sitting in this strip joint, watching this explicit show. But it will not stay on stage. Annie will not stay just a sex object. She *is* a sex object. Everyone is...at least everyone who is healthy and happy. But Annie is not just a sex object. She uses her sex, her porn-hooker-sex background to make the people in the audience see that *they* are sex objects, but not *just* sex objects. Annie can do this because she does not deny, hide, or underestimate the sex-porn-tacky-child aspect of her soul as so many do, but in this performance, she exploited this erotic power.

Frank Moore

Frank Moore created a performance group through leading a workshop. He focuses mainly on long, ritualistic pieces. His regular work includes public events, experimental theatre, and tacky and outrageous cabaret. His articles have been published in High Performance *magazine,* The Act, Shades of Grey, *and* TDR.

Armand Demeulemeester
Horizon
Brussels, Belgium
April 13 - May 5
Michel François
Camille von Scholtz Camomille
April 8 - June 10
Johan J.A.G. Muhle
Atelier de St. Anne
April 14 - May 13

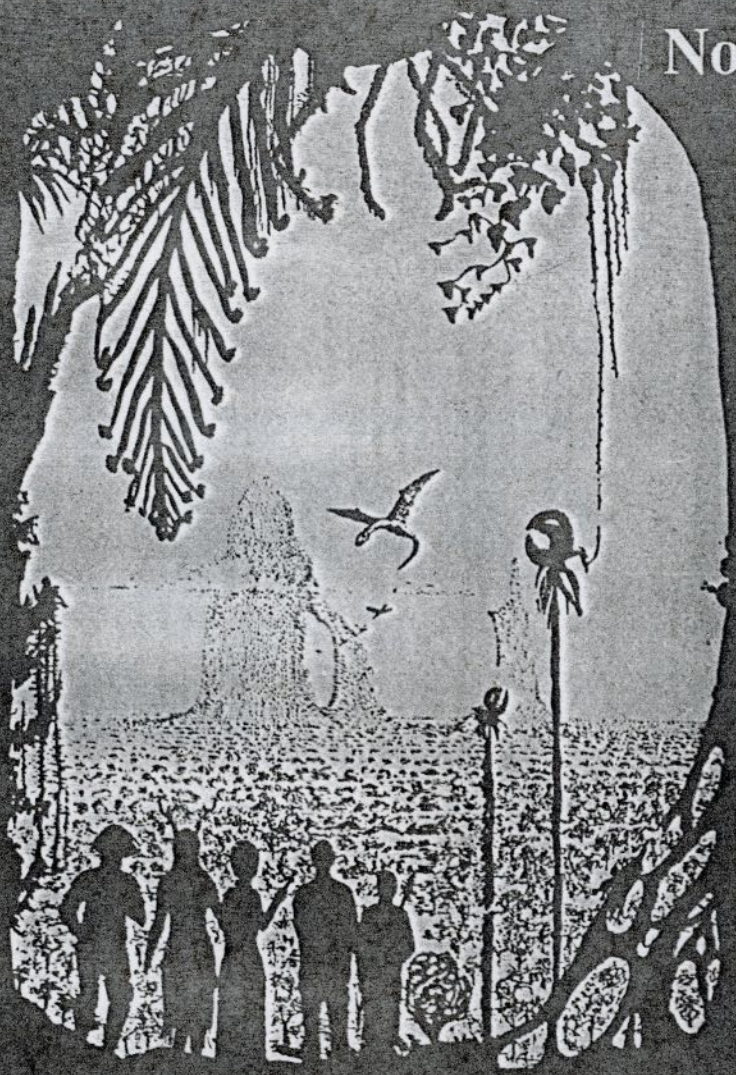
Though its 16th-century role as hub of European commerce has disappeared, Brussels still retains much of its former commercial emphasis. The imposing structure of the Belgian stock exchange, the "Bourse" or "Brouckere," dominates Brussels. Streets and squares surrounding Brussels' central Place de Bourse are called Blvd. M. Lemonnier (derivative of "money-maker"), rue de Commerçants d'Anvers (Antwerp Commerce Street), and Place de la Monnaie (Money Place). While the Bourse stands for how the Brussels citizens made their money, the nearby and equally imposing Palais de Justice provides echoes of how they protected it. The building's threatening bulk and gargoyle-encrusted facades give the viewer warning that the mere idea of separating these arch-bourgeois citizens from their property was, and is, out of the question.

In the midst of this fading monetary center,

This Magazine is also available on Tape for people with reading or sight difficulties

INSIDE

No 13



Autumn 1989

Dear Tuppy

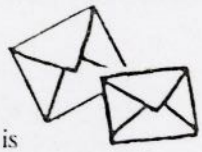
I am more than flattered to be in your amazing little book. To be listed among my heros who have influenced me and my work, among many of my friends, and among many people who I should have known about but did not, sent chills of satisfaction over me. The book opens up new possibilities by listing what has been done all over the world and throughout history. Too often we are made to think we are the only weirdos doing weird things. Your book gives the context to the works. I am taking the book to the library to look up the people I had not known about. By the by, the new t.d.r., a performance magazine out of N.Y.U., has articles about and by Annie Sprinkle and Veronica Vera as well as by me.

Frank Moore performing with his troupe

I like that you got to know me and what I do (and now I know you and what you do) through the likes of the *Spectator* and *Penthouse Forum* because I get shit from snobs for letting myself and my art be "exploited" in such "porno rags". It is just another attempt, which failed, to limit communication between people. Your club sounds great. I wonder if there is any way you can use my video, *Fairytales Can Come True*, within your club. It is 35 mins long. It is not a how-to sex film, but how-to relationship film.As a teenager, I could not understand why they were showing me how-to sex films because I did not have a relationship to have sex in because of my self-attitude of ugliness. So in the video I play a wimp chump who is so into his ugliness thinking that he cannot see that there is a sexy woman who likes him better than she likes her present macho boyfriend. Out pops my crusty, acid mouthed, wise-cracking (English) Fairy Godmother, who not-too tactfully pushes me to drop my crummy self-attitude and go after the girl against my advice of my over- protective mother and of course I get the girl in the end.

I made the video about 8 years ago, and it has been shown all over - but not to the disabled. It has been hard to crack into that audience, not because they do not like it (the disabled who have seen it love it), not because of its marginal technical quality or the sex scenes (calling them that makes the video more more racy than it is). The

problem has been that people who buy rent films for the disabled are not the disabled but social workers and parents of the disabled. These think the video would give the disabled "false hopes". In fact, at one C.P. day centre, the video was banned after it was shown because "the clients" started expressing themselves and demanded more freedom. Sounds like you are raising the same "false hopes". In reality, *Fairytales...* is one of the most accessible, least intense of my videos. I just finished a 90 minute video, *Out Of Isolation*, in which I play a guy who was put in an institution as a baby because they said he had no I.Q.. It is about how he established a relationship with his new PT, dragging her, day by day, into his inner world. The video is very stark, physical and erotic. I am enclosing for you the poem on which the video is based. You would also like *Erotic Play*, which is a documentary about the year I asked strangers to play outside of taboos.
Getting the package from you meant a lot to me.
Yours Lustfully,



Frank Moore
NB *Out of Isolation* is reproduced on page 59
Photo: Frank Moore and the Shaman Performance Artists, photo by Eric Kroll

Dear Tuppy,

I would thoroughly enjoy boosting the confidence of your socially and physically handicapped members on a pen-pal basis, if they would like to write to me. They would help me to fulfil my own erotic fantasies. I'm not in this for money. Here's a photo of me at my word processor.
Love and bubble baths,
Selina
Box 3551, Regina,Saskatchewan
S4P 3J8, Canada

Dear OUTSIDERS
I am now a trained therapist and would be willing to see any of you at the Metanoia Psychotherapy Insititute where I work. We operate on a sliding income price scale, and the address is 13, North Common, Ealing, London W5. There's another group you should know about: it's North London Link and they offer one-to-one counselling & therapy in your own home, also on a sliding scale. Contact Anne Davidson, Elana Leigh or Ki Harley on 01 349 9827.
Sybil Jones

OUT OF ISOLATION

By Frank Moore and Gary Thomsen (also available on Video)

A mat and a hat rack with two pairs of shorts hanging on it are on the otherwise bare performing area. Harsh bright lights. Jim lies in his world of the mat.

I lie here in my universe of the mat, my bed. I always have been here living in the universe forever, forever. My mat, my pillow, my sheet, my blanket...for countless force-fed

meals, enemas, mindless baths, shaves, haircuts, pissed-on sheet...many many harsh-lighted days, many, many semi-dark nights. Outside my universe there are bony fingered, blotched-skin creatures. Sometimes they invaded my universe...the sickly-sweet smelling ones. They "take care of me"...they handle me like they handle my pillow. Their voices are high, loud, flat. Sometimes they lie on beds beside mine, moaning and crying for alone many, many then they get quiet and others of them carry the still ones away.

There are always new ones, but they are always the same.

There are different Bony Fingers who invade my universe, who strip me,probe me/stretch me until it hurts...do strange things to me like rubbing ice on my body then brushing me hard. They talk to me in funny ways...loud and flat. They say, "we're doing this for your own good." They don't think I understand what they are saying. I don't understand most of their words. But I understand enough; I understand I am not a mister, a mrs, a miss, a nurse, a doctor. I understand I am not a Bony Finger. They can keep their universe of bony fingers. I am not going out of my universe of the mat. I understand enough. A long long, when I cried out, they made me numb. I do not like being numb. In my universe of the mat, I am not numb. But they said crying out was not *appropraite behaviour*. I don't think *appropriate behaviour* is good. Everything that is not *appropriate behaviour* makes me feel. But I understand enough to stop crying when the Bony Fingers are around. Stop making any sound any more when they are around. They stopped making me numb. I understand enough. I discovered a way of rubbing myself that makes me warm, makes me feel good. Bony fingers slapped me away from feeling good. Not *appropriate behaviour*. I understand enough. Do *appropriate behaviour* in harsh light when they are around. I am still, quiet. In my universe of the mat. I do not even look into their world. I am busy creating within me. But when the harsh light goes and the semi darkness comes ...then I laugh, I cry, I rub my body and good feeling comes. Not so loud or so much that the harsh light, the bony fingers, and their numbness come back. But just enough. And by rubbing, I know I am not Bony Fingers.

In the harsh light, they treat me just like my pillow. They change me just like they change my pillow. Always fast like they need to move on. Sometimes, the special Fingers, the *prodders* stand over me and say I should come into their universe, what they are doing to me will help me.

They talk like they talk to my pillow. Why should I want to go into their world of greys, where everyone wears white? In *my* universe of the mat, I lie on smooth warm soft softness and create the brightest colours and the sweetest sounds to surround me. But I am not worried. Bony fingers never really believe I can ever enter their universe. I only wish I was not the only Soft Finger...I wish there was another Soft Finger in my universe of the mat...someone to share in the bright colours and sweet sounds...someone I could laugh with, cry with, move with, share good feeling with...someone who would be with me on the mat, touch me not like touching my pillow, not like pulling things out of me, or to make me different. But only because we are the only Soft Fingers in the universe of the mat.

There is a new producer. Do not look at Bony Fingers. But catch sight of the same white. Miss Roberts talking to a pillow called Mr. Merrill. Same words about, "to make you better". But sound of voice is somehow different. Softer. The touch is still changing the pillow of me. But not Bony Fingers! I sneak a peak. Same white, but different. The skin is soft like my skin. The smell is almost like my smell. Almost enough to try to open my universe to this new soft finger. But the words came, the same words as Bony Fingers. The prodding soft finger strips me bare just like she is changing the pillow of me and puts me into the exercise trunks. Easier to probe my pillows of a body in these trunks. The prodding fingers do the same hurting "make you better" exercises on me as the other Bony Fingers before. The pillow of me, instead of touching me. When the Soft Finger and the harsh light were gone, I cried louder than before. I do not care if they make me numb. Maybe numbness is better if Soft Fingers are the same as Bony Fngers, if Soft Fingers also want me to go into grey and white, if soft fingers does not want to be with me, then numbness is better.

Soft Fingers keeps coming back. At first, rushing to somewhere else, trying to pull me into the grey universe. I know how to fight against that Bony Finger trick. But I like her soft warm skin touching me...like my warm sheet under me making me a better person. For that moment we are the only ones in the universe... Together, then Soft Finger remembers the Bony Fingers and starts touching me like a pillow again.

But the moments of being together grow. I like when she forgets and makes mistakes and comes closer into my world. I like when she just sits on my mat...on our mat and just looks at me, just listens to me. I feel more and more like I can show her my moves,

show her my sounds I like when Soft Finger became Jane and I became Jim. I like when Jane just lies on the mat and we just look at each other, listen to each other, even when we really don't understand the meaning... but we feel. I like it when Jane holds my hand. I like it when Jane comes into my world of dim light, when she wears colours bright, soft smooth flowing...not Bony Finger white... and even her hair is flowing strangely soft. I like when Jane makes the harsh light go away for awhile, when Jane rocks me, and Jane rubs my head. I like when Jane slowly takes all the colours off. She is soft everywhere. She puts exercise trunks on. She lies next to me on the mat. She makes soft sounds and soft moves...just like me. She is just like me now. Two Soft Fingers on the mat. I like it when Jane lets me rubs Jane's back, when Jane calls me Jim. I like it when we are in our universe of the mat, sharing not appropriate behaviour...laughing, crying, making good feelings come. Rocking or holding hands made different good feelings come than when I rub my body, Jane and I move our bodies together, making soft sounds together, together making good feelings come.

But suddenly Jane was gone. I was alone in happiness. Jane would come back into the happiness with me on the mat. So I was happy.

But when Jane came the next day, she was in bony white. Jane had become like a Bony Finger again. She said what we were doing was not appropruate behaviour. She used words like romance and sexual that I did not understand. Jane left. The numbness came back without the Bony Fingers giving me anything.

Jane came back as a Bony Fingers. I kept rising out of the numbness in hope whenever Jane came back, but then fell deeper and deeper.

Jane came. I could not hold the crying back. I cried in the harsh light. Then Jane cried too. She made the harsh light go away. She came back into our universe of the mat and rocked me. Jane told me to teach her the noises and moves of our universe of the mat. In the universe with me, together with me.

Together we can expand the universe beyond the mat. Jane can bring other soft fingers in. The Bony Fingers begin to fade. I can see, begin to see colours beyond the mat, begin to hear laughter beyond the mat. Jane says she and I together will explore the universe that is outside. She and I are happy.

READER'S GUIDE TO THEATER

photo/Eric Kroll

CRITIC'S CHOICE: FRANK MOORE

"I have a body that is ideal for a performance artist," says Frank Moore, who was born with cerebral palsy and is 99 percent physically disabled. Moore's performances are touching in the most literal and provocative sense. A recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts performance art fellowship in 1985, Moore shares with Karen Finley (who's also appearing in town this week) the distinction of being on the "hit list" set up by the fearmongers who seek to set the arts agenda these days. (Performance spaces that receive NEA grants are investigated; if they have presented certain artists, such as Finley and Moore, their grant-worthiness is called into doubt.) But if, to paraphrase the title of Finley's controversial show, the oppressors keep their victims ready, Moore refuses to play victim. In his group piece *Outrageous Horror Show*, he and his company, Chero, employ erotic play, nude exhibitionism, audience participation, and unorthodox concepts of narrative, space, time, and beauty as means to challenge the barriers society erects around sexuality, cripples, and art. Moore's appearance is the first offering in "Year of Peril (The Censorship Issue)," a series of performances that will also feature Annie Sprinkle's *Sex Education Class* and filmmakers Monte Cazazza and Michelle Handelman's *True Gore* later this month. Club Lower Links, Thursday, October 11 (954 W. Newport, 248-5238), 7 PM. $7. —*Albert Williams*

ISSUE 15 FALL 1989 $2.00

PERFORMANCE ART MAGAZINE

P-FORM

CENSORSHIP

The Magical Act of Doing

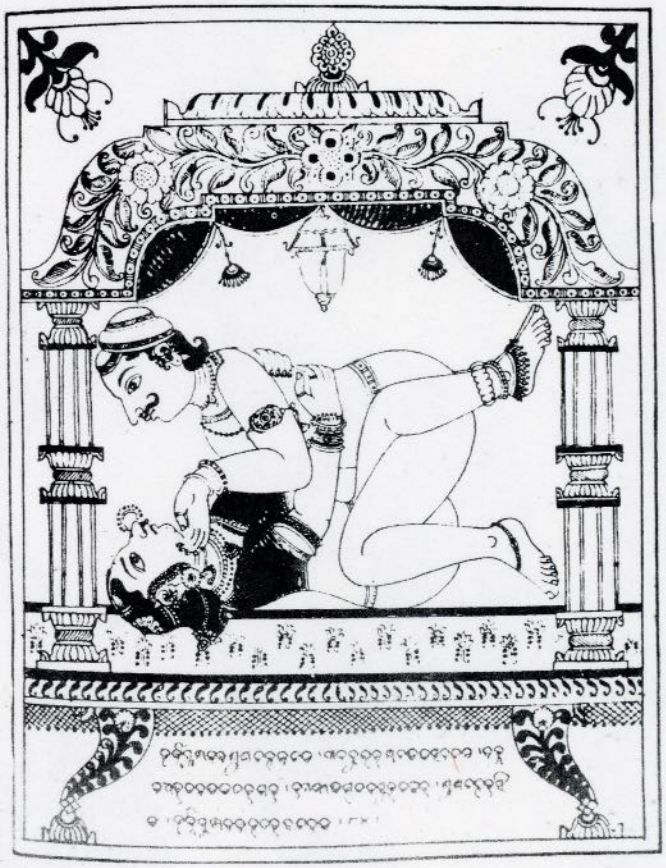
by Frank Moore

...the poet is the last person who is still speaking the truth when no one dares to...the first person to begin shaping the new consciousness when no one else has begun to sense it...these are two of the most essential human functions. Pound once said, "artists are the antennae of the race." whether or not we have an audience, this strong visioning and shaping of a master poem informs the conscience of generations to come.
—Diane di Prima

Frank Moore began doing private, erotic performances in the early 70's, which have developed into long ritualistic pieces, public events, experimental theatre, and tacky and outrageous cabaret, as recently seen in the film Mondo New York. ***Moore creates books, videos, and musical recordings as well. He has taught at U.C. Berkley and is an N.E.A. Fellowship recipient.***

Most people think the power or the effect of art comes from the seeing of the art. Thus the focus at least in western art has been doing work to be shown, to be seen by as many people as possible...or at least someone else. This has caused the development of art as a product to be packaged and sold, to be created with at least one eye on what is sellable, the latest art trends, what is presently politically correct, what issues and styles are currently acceptable to the audience, to the galleries, to the art critics and experts. This blocks artists from doing their visioning and dreaming function, turning them into agents of the present order of things.

The dynamic of seeing art is not the fundamental dynamic of art. The doing of art is art's basic dynamic. The doing of art and having other people see the art work are two separate dynamics, events, rituals. The seeing of art is what the viewer or the listener does in her head. The doing of art is the ritual of creation, is what the artists does. In reality, this ritual has more to do with the act of doing than the act of creation. When a child first draws crazy lines on the wall, he is not trying to create something or express himself or show you something...but to do something for some effective purpose that our linear logic cannot grasp. The crazy person does his insane rituals, not to express himself but to keep the sky from falling or to make pain go away. And it works. The sky does not fall down. Maybe it is because of the rituals of the insane.



The very act of doing changes the whole universe. This is a key principle of magic. By doing a ritual or by speaking a spell, you can effect change. Painting a picture, doing a dance, writing a poem, any act of art can be a magical ritual, the doing of which has nonlinear effects. Seen in this way, most acts of creation are private rituals done in personal caves. What we usually think of as works of art are aftermaths of art.

The cave artists operated in this magical way. Their art was not for looking at. This is why they did their rituals and paintings in very dangerously inaccessible, pitch-black bowels of caves. The purpose of these paintings and rituals was to magically effect change in the world (the past, the present, and the future as well as the life after death...) or to communicate with the universal powers. This magical effect and these communications were caused by doing the art. The act of doing this magical art released an energy, some of which remained within these caves, making them "holy" or magical" sites. The walls of a lot of these caves have layers upon layers of magical drawings done by different tribes over time spans of hundreds or thousands of years. These tribes may have been drawn to these dangerously inaccessible caves by this special energy, released through the doing of art, stored in the caves, radiating out of the caves, and recharged by every new act of magic art done within the cave.

This magical action art is not the only kind of art. In the time of the cave art, there was body art which was meant to attract and turn on the opposite sex, and other kinds which were meant to strike fear in the enemy, etc.—all through the medium of seeing, hearing, experiencing the art product. There were also arts of decorating, educating, and entertaining which used the medium of seeing/hearing/experiencing by a spectator. Moreover, the action art and the seeing art at times were combined.

"...ways of being politically correct are laid on the art and the artist by the powers either of the establishment or the 'alternative' power systems of the present society or both..."

The problem with our modern frame of art reality is not that we do art to be seen, but that we have forgotten (or have been made to forget by those who control what is to be seen and what is not) that the power of doing art is the main power of art. The private performance is a way to regain the magical power of the doing of art. Defining what is a private performance is an interesting way to enter the magic. I define it as a ritual that is not for an audience. It is something that has to be done, something you may not even want to do. One of the easiest to frame as a private performance is a shaman going to his secret spot to do rites nobody will see to open himself up for channeling visions that he cannot personally use or tell anyone about. We have seen other obvious private performances—the child, the madman, the artist alone doing art. We can add things like doodling, singing in the shower, playing invisible drums to the radio when you are safe alone in your room. It is something that has to come out. It is something too silly, too taboo, too sacred, too intense, too raw, too vulnerable to be done in public, to be expressed. This may be where real art begins. This kind of doing by one person is clearly private performance. It has an element of secrecy and undercover. I can remember singing on my bed along with the radio, quickly stopping when anyone opened the door, not wanting to be exposed, not wanting to lessen the magic.

This hidden ritual not only kept me from insanity (some people will say that makes it therapy, not art), but opened nonlinear routes of possibilites not only for me, but for everybody. The private performance gives the artist freedom from limits and shoulds and morals, so she can go beyond where the society or culture or the consciousness has reached, to connect to the universal power. By doing this she brings a new universal area into this reality.

In my work, I have been trying to discover how private performances affect the outer world. The most obvious and least controversial way in which they affect the outer world is that the doing of a piece that no one other than the doer will know about or experience psychologically changes the doing artist. By his relating to the outer world after the private event, the change is transferred to the outer world. In our culture which focuses on masses, on bigness, and linear cause-effect process, this small, intimate, changing effect is usually dismissed as not meaning very much, not doing very much. In my work, I have been applying what I understand of the principles of quantum physics. Physicists have found that there are events that cannot be explained by normal linear ways of looking at things. Linear seeing turns out to be a small frame on top of a much bigger frame they call the chaos theory. In this what first appears to be a small event with little or not effect sets off a pattern of effect. This pattern sometimes even fades or disappears for a time. Then it reappears, causing a wide reaching chain reaction, whereas an event that at first appears big and important usually, after a burst of energy, fades in effect. When seen in this light, the changing effect that is transferred by the artist from the private performance to the outer reality by his living in that outer reality becomes a very powerful source of change.

But this is not the only source of power for change. Artists are surrogates of society who go into the reality of dreams and myths and universal truths. ~~Private, secret performances give the artists a bubble~~

Erratum

The following section was inadvertently omitted from Frank Moore's "The Magical Act of Doing" in Issue 15. It should fall between the end of page 7 and the beginning of page 8.

Private, secret performances give the artists a bubble that is free of taboos and limits. Within this bubble the artist explores the world of visions and dreams. From this place, the artist broadcasts patterns of new possibilities through nonlinear channels, through her body, back to the outer world. (modern physicists have described the sub-nuclear particles as patterns of possibilities.) Some of these patterns of new possibilities are stored in the artist's body and in the site, to be released within time; but at the time of the magical private act, a large amount of these patterns of new possibilities are released directly into the outer world through nonlinear means, causing nonlinear chain reactions of change.

Both the direct broadcasting and the radiating through time of these patterns of possibilities are experiential mediums. These mediums are much less vulnerable to being co-opted or mistranslated than are documentation or art products. Documentation and art products are linear mediums by which private performances have an effect in the outer world. This is because the broadcasting and the radiating of new possibility patterns are transmitted on physical, psychic, subconscious energy levels...rather than on intellectual, visual, political, conceptual levels.

I have been experimenting with this nonlinear effect ever since, both in my private and public work. In my private work, it is the relationship between me and an active other within a special reality beyond the normal taboos and social constraints. Within this intimate reality, the active other cannot be seen as an audience.

I sometimes put ads in the straight casting papers for actors. The ultimate purpose for this is not to get actors for my work (although once in a blue moon I find an actor in this way). The ultimate purpose is to expose society to the magical alternative reality that this kind of work, the kind of person I am, and the kind of body I have, represent...exposing it one on one, personally. By this magical confrontation, seeds and time bombs are planted within the active other. She becomes a carrier of the magical virus. The straight actor probably will never do weirdness called performance (although that is always a possibility), but somewhere down the line, the seed will grow, the bomb will explode. When Annie Sprinkle and Veronica Vera turn an average person into a sex star in their private studio, when Linda Montano teaches someone to be a saint at her retreat, when I train my Chero apprentices, we and our "students" become metaphors which open the possibility to society at large. By that average-looking woman becoming a sex star, society is closer to becoming a sex star. By riding within metaphor reality, artists reach the realm of myth, dream and the universals.

My "public" work is firmly rooted in my private work...so much so that is it not useful to try to divide it up in that way. When I do a public piece, I am not doing it for the audience. It is public only because an audience would add to the energy, or at least will not get in the way. Elements of my public pieces arise from the private, secret, intense roots. The purpose of the private piece is not to create these elements for the public pieces, but to do these elementary acts within a sacred freedom. These acts then find their way into the public performances.

When the linear reasons are cut away from the rehearsal process, what are usually called rehearsals can be seen as private rituals, valid within themselves, whether or not they lead to public performance.

My public pieces usually have a private aspect to them. This was especially true seven years ago when I did a free bi-weekly performance series at the University of California at Berkeley. Although it was open, and advertised, to the public, usually only one or two people came. This forced these people to be an active part of the performance (even if they walked right out). This created a private space in which magic could happen. The acts performed there have found their way into my public pieces; the documentation of these pieces have gotten me grants and bookings. But these, as we have seen, are only linear effects. There were nights when nothing seemed to have happened. But years later, the people have come back to say the performance was a turning point in their lives. I have stopped trying to get a linear understanding of what happens in a performance, and rather just do, merely perform...and let the magic do what it will.

Public pieces can turn into private pieces. . . .

Guest Contributors:

Steve Baun lives and works with sound in Chicago.

Lester Brodzik, artist.

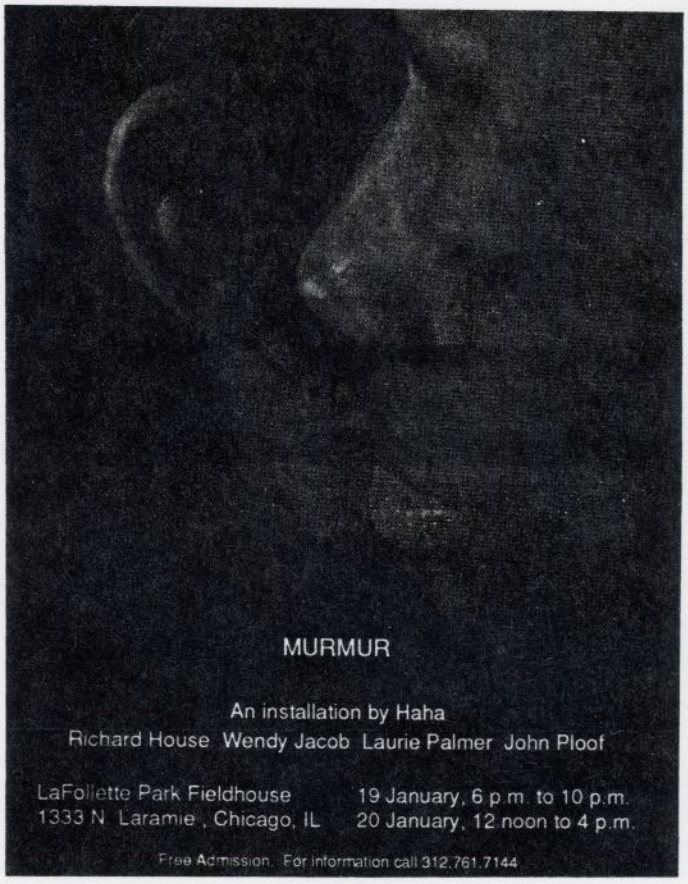
F.R. Forster and T. Burns: 1100 Club.

Goat Island is a collaborative performance group based out of Chicago.

James McManus' most recent novel is *GhostWaves*. He teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. "Smash and Scatteration" will appear in January in the *New American Writing* anthology regarding censorship.

Carole Tormollan is a writer and curator living in Chicago. She is presently working on an interview with Hester Reeve for the next issue of P-FORM.

Mary Beth Valentin is arts editor and reviews poetry and performance for **Letter eX**. She also writes and paints, but has not yet mastered doing both at the same time.


MURMUR
An installation by Haha
Richard House Wendy Jacob Laurie Palmer John Ploof
LaFollette Park Fieldhouse
1333 N Laramie , Chicago, IL
19 January, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
20 January, 12 noon to 4 p.m.
Free Admission. For information call 312.761.7144

private pieces. In my work, there comes a point, which is different for each person, where there is a change from passive audience to active participant. Even watching becomes an act of involvement and vulnerability. At this point, a large number chose to leave the performance, which is in itself a vulnerable act of involvement. This would turn the performance from a piece that my cast and I are projecting for the public to an act, a magic ritual which all of the people there are performing together.

"It is something too silly, too taboo, too sacred, too intense, too raw, too vulnerable to be done in public, to be expressed. This may be where real art begins."

In reality, a large percentage of my public ritual work is made up of private and secret sections. Some of these private, secret sub-rituals take place before the performance, or within a hidden cave, locked box or vault, away from the experience and knowing of the audience. What happens within these secret sub-rituals greatly influences what happens in the public performances, even though there are no physical or linear links between the public and the secret sub-rituals. When the secret sub-ritual fails to reach the taboo-breaking intensity, the public ritual falls flat. Kristine Ambrosia has taken this aspect of the nonlinear principle further by performing secret rituals alone on a mountain top or in a hidden room while her public performance goes on many miles away.

Other sections of my public performance are private because they are only experienced within the mind and/or body of the person, or between the bodies of two people. I have several techniques I use to achieve this. For a large portion of the performance, the people are blindfolded and are directed not to speak. In this way, what she experiences comes without the influences of others. She is taken alone into caves without knowing what others have done or how they have reacted. She is told she can do whatever she wants, but not to reveal what happens within the room. This creates a freedom from taboos and from outside pressures.

As we have seen, the secret, hidden quality has always been an aspect of the kind of art we have been talking about today, one of the reasons to use secrecy is to draw a circle around the magic work that protects it from the prevailing taboos, morals, and judgements. This is especially important for a student just starting out, who cannot distance her artistic self from social pressures. But this circle or secrecy is not just for protection. The shaman did her art within secrecy because this focused the energy released by the act back upon the act. This feedback cycle intensified the power of the act. A good example of this is when Barbara Smith sat nude on a comfortable mat for a night in a room. Men could come in one by one, and do whatever they wanted with her, but what was done in the room could not be revealed. For years after, rumors of what happened in that room grew up wildly, continuing to release imaginative energy. Smith has done public performances in which she had tantric sex. But on deep levels, this may be much less powerful than the performance in which she may have just sat on a comfortable mat. The magical trigger was the public secrecy.

All the qualities and hidden channels of effecting, healing, changing, dreaming, myth-giving powers that we have seen in private performances are also present in public performances; but in public performances layers of seductions, limitations, considerations, taboos, morals, ways of being politically correct are laid on the art and the artist by the powers either of the establishment of the "alternative" power systems of the present society or both. When I do a public piece, I am not swayed by how many people come or how many walk out, because I am still functioning, and rooted, in the channels of magical change that I became aware of by doing private performances. This rooting in private rituals gives the artist freedom from, and weapons against, the corrupting concerns of money, fame, competition, good taste, acceptance, and the search for on audience. This freedom is important in shamanisitc art, which is art that acts for nonlinear change, because, by bringing new dreams, new myths, new visions into society from the universal underworld, it will radically change society. By being linked to a power system, be it establishment or alternative, the artist is trapped in a basic conflict of interest, because she has aligned herself either with protecting the social system or with a certain manner of change, when her true job is to carry the new visionary myths from the gods into this world through her body.

"...tubes up asshole and down throat and up the nose..."

When the artist is rooted in private rituals, it becomes clear that she is not an agent for society, or some political movement, or the art galleries and art "experts", or even for her own individualistic imagination. Instead, she is an agent of gods, of dreams, of visions and myths. This causes reactions in society, especially when the piece is public. Karen Finley is criticized for limiting her audience because she offends them by her words, anger, nudity. An artist who is rooted in the private channels is not affected by this attempt to curb the power of the art by strapping it to audience acceptance and agreement. The

power of a Karen Finley is the taboo-breaking energy she releases into society. This societal pressure to tame art down, which usually sounds very reasonable and comes even from liberal sources, is very hard for the artist to resist who is not familiar with the hidden channels of change.

Another example of society's attempt to rechannel the change coming from shamanistic art is what an "art expert" told me" "your work is...not art...(because) it doesn't address the concerns...(which are a) part of the current art dialog, whether it be mainstream or 'alternative'...curators and presenters are (not) obliged to show it." She went on to say that I should stay "in (my) own sphere", and that I don't need the public channels that galleries represent. Which is true. But galleries and the people who think what is in galleries is the full range of art need the artists, not the reverse. The magic of private performance is needed to expand the narrow, shallow river of "the current art dialogue," controlled both in content and depth by the art experts. Fortunately, there are galleries which are willing to go into the magical unknown represented by private performances.

Another way society tries to deball the magical power or private performance is to co-opt it by absorbing it back into the normal reality. What happened to Paul McCarthy is a classic example. Paul is, or was, the best of the modern shamanistic performers.

In the '70's, he did performances in run down motels. He transformed into a rubber-masked trickster who called forth realities of vomit, of messy meals of dog food, mayo and catsup..., of wearing women's clothes...of hard-ons dangling out of girls' underwear fucking dolls, tubes up asshole and down throat and up the nose..., of fucking alone in a motel bed in mayo..., of walking bloodied barefoot on glass. Friends watched via video in another motel room, But most ran out in shock. This shock is a special kind of shock. It is not the shock of when a youngster uses obscenity or when a guy exposes himself. It is not a reaction or an aggressive act. It is more like culture shock. It is a reality shock. It is when two different realities come together, collide, and combine. This happened around Paul's pieces. Most people could not handle it. But the shock released incredible amounts of uplifting energy.

By the early '80's, Paul had been discovered by the art scene. He was invited to the S.F. Art Institute to do a performance. The big hall was packed with students. Paul did his rituals, which in the past would have cleared the room, shocked and physically disturbed most people; but this time, the audience laughed and clapped at everything this clown did. They even drank catsup with him to show how hip they were. There was no shock, no magic, no colliding of realities.

Paul stopped, defeated. He was cut off from his private, magical roots by being transformed from an outlaw magician into a hot artist. He told me the day after he felt the loss of the magic but did not know how to get it back. After a few more performances, he stopped performing...which is a great loss to us all. He was defeated because he underrated not only the importance of his private magic, but how much it threatened normal reality.

30¢ **New York City Tribune**

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1990 THIRTY CENTS

Besieged by Demands for More Money, Taxpayers See Funds Descending Into Cesspool of 'Art' Filth

SPECIAL REPORT

NEA Paints Veil Of Secrecy on Art Works Felt To Be Obscene

BY WALTER SKOLD
New York City Tribune Staff

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Some of the material in this series of articles may be considered offensive. We apologize. However, without accurately describing and quoting the programs and people who are the focus of this report, the nature of their art might be obscured.*

First of 4 Parts

"We are not the nation's official pornographer, and it's important that the country know that," said National Endowment for the Arts Chairman John Frohnmayer when he took control of the beleaguered agency last October.

Despite that proclamation, Frohnmayer may have a lot of house cleaning to do if critics have their way. A special investigation by the *New York City Tribune* has discovered that for at least a decade, the NEA and the New York State Council on the Arts have consistently funded artists and institutions who create what critics are now calling "obscene" art.

Far from boasting about its support for controversial performance art, the NEA has tried to maintain a veil of secrecy by refusing to respond to reporters' queries and by asking at least one playhouse to avoid causing the agency any "trouble with legislators."

The nationwide turmoil over "ob-

scene" art exploded last year when the NEA partially funded the exhibits of works by photographers Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano. Included in their works were pictures of a crucifix submerged in urine, a fist in a man's rectum, and a little girl exposing herself.

A similiar situation was uncovered 2 weeks ago when this paper reported that $25,000 of state money had been granted to support a series of shows that included 12 performances by Annie Sprinkle, a self-proclaimed sex goddess and former prostitute, who has starred in 150 pornographic films.

In the show, *Annie Sprinkle: Post-Porn Modernist*, Sprinkle masturbated repeatedly, urinated in a stage toilet, performed what she called a "ballet" with her very large breasts, and invited the audience to come inspect her open vagina with a flashlight.

The *City Tribune* has now learned that the NYSCA approved funding for a performance by Johanna Went, a performance artist, who has a reputation for using such stage props as "giant, bloody tampons," "satanic bunnies," "three-foot turds," and "dildos" in her shows.

Another performance artist who has benefited from federal largesse is Karen Finley. Her provocative shows were described recently by *Village Voice* art critic Elinor Fuchs as "a toxic landfill of throwaway bodies" which creates a "theatre of disgust filled with obscene fantasies."

According to the text of a 1986 Finley performance at the Kitchen — a performing arts and video playhouse in the Chelsea section of Manhattan — which was published in the *Drama Review*, she talks about cutting off men's testicles, putting them in her mouth and mixing them with her excrement — she says "dung" — because she is "The Queen of the Dung Dynasty."

"Using tax dollars to fund this type of trash is an absolute outrage," said Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., who used the example of Sprinkle last Thursday when he attacked the NEA publicly for some of the ways in which it spends

FRANKLIN FURNACE'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY ALBUM

Award presentations to 20th century avant- garde artists who have contributed to popuar culture.

THE ARTIES *were the honors bestowed upon avant-garde artists by the Franklin Furnace in 1986. Lily Tomlin hosted the event.*

government funds.

"Miss Sprinkle is manipulating herself with toys and selling opportunities for audience participation in her act with the assistance of tax dollars," he said on the House floor, "generously provided by the New York State Council on the Arts, which receives half a million dollars in unrestricted funds each year from the National Endowment for the Arts."

Went was supposed to perform at the Kitchen next month, but curator Scott Macaulay said she canceled her scheduled performance for personal reasons.

This would not have been Went's first tax-funded performance in the City, however. In 1983, '85 and '87 she appeared at the Franklin Furnace, in Tribeca, Manhattan, as part of series that were partly funded with grants from both the NEA and NYSCA.

Like the Kitchen, the Furnace is an avant-garde, experimental theatre, founded in 1977 by Martha Wilson, to, she wrote in 1986, "fill a void in the art world" and to nourish the 20th Century's avant-garde tradition. It serves as an archive for hundreds of artists and presently boasts the largest collection of art in book form in the United States.

Foundation Grants

Besides government grants, the Furnace receives funding from more than 30 foundations, including the Hugh Hefner Foundation, the New York Times Company Foundation, Con Edison, the Swedish Consulate General, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

The amount of sexually explicit experimental art the gallery has sponsored over the years has only been a small percentage of its total product, but many of the female performance artists whom they have accommodated have been at the extreme cutting- and controversial-edge of the art world.

In the critical artistic community that reviews this genre of work, the women are labelled "post-porn modernists," "feminist artists" or simply "avant-garde."

Kitty Carlisle Hart, chairwomen of the NYSCA, adamantly denied last week that state funds had been allocated specifically for *Sprinkle*, but the approved 1990 contract with the Kitchen did include four performances by Went.

Whether or not the Kitchen actually received direct state funding this year for the recent Sprinkle performance is open to interpretation, but in early 1984, the NEA sent four officials scrambling to the City to avert a publicity nightmare because of a show called *Second Coming*.

The month-long exhibition, which was developed by a feminist/activist group called Carnival Knowledge, also included a 1-night performance by

> "The NEA officials' message was: 'Please don't put our name on anything that is going to cause us trouble with legislators.'"
>
> —*Martha Wilson*

Sprinkle and other women called *Deep Inside Porn Stars*. The whole exhibit was supposed to explore the possibility of "a new definition of pornography, one that is not demeaning to women, men and children."

Among the exhibits displayed were:

- An 86-year-old woman boasting about her sexual activities with teenagers.
- A refrigerator decorated with inflated condoms.
- Pictures of lesbians inserting dildos into each other.

In the controversy that ensued after a 1984 *City Tribune* article about *Second Coming*, Hart wrote a lengthy letter to state Senator Frank Padavan, R-C, Queens, denying any specific funding of the show. The Furnace had received $73,370 from NYSCA and $208,390 from NEA that season.

She also told Padavan that "we fund groups based on their administrative capability to spend the taxpayers' money in a prudent manner and upon their artistic track record."

Padavan was not impressed with Hart's denials; he wrote back that "monies being given to the Franklin Furnace obviously makes it possible for them to accommodate this type of despicable presentation."

"When you state that you make your determination regarding funding based on the totality of their efforts without taking into consideration any component, the reason being the free expression of artistic endeavors," he wrote, "I am only compelled to say 'baloney!' "

Wilson, who also directs activities at the Furnace, told the *City Tribune* that the NEA officials' message to the board was; "Please don't put our name on anything that is going to cause us trouble with legislators."

Wilson is quite proud of all of the various Furnace productions and feels she has nothing to hide.

"We are heavily supported by the NEA for doing experimental work," said Wilson. "That is our cultural mission.

"There is no doubt about it, they pay for risky art," she added. "If they fund the whole series, I will put their name on it."

Based on newspaper reviews, NYSCA funding records and material about the shows kept in the Furnace archives, which the *City Tribune* has examined, it is probable that in recent years New Yorkers' taxes have partially or fully funded shows, which have depicted the following:

- Bodily excretions.
- Sexual intercourse and masturbation.
- Shamanistic and new age sex-religion rituals.
- Graphic tales of incest and sexual assault.
- Transvestism.
- The striking mixture of sacred and erotic images.

More than 10 days ago, the NEA was asked by the *City Tribune* to provide funding details for various artists and performances, but it was only after Rohrabacher spoke out about Sprinkle Feb. 1 that officials began supplying some answers, albiet sketchy ones. While the exact funding details are fuzzy, the *City Tribune* has learned the following facts:

In 1987, the NEA gave a $40,000 grant to the Furnace for its visual arts program. Included in the year's series was one performance by Went and an undetermined number of performances by Frank Moore and Cheri Gaulke.

'Hyena of Performance Art'

The 1987 Furnace press release for Went's show, *Twin Travel Terror*, described her as the "Hyena of Performance Art," whose shows "have never

failed to challenge, amuse, frighten and stimulate audiences."

Cindy Carr, an art critic for the *Village Voice*, who has covered such risque artists extensively, described the actual show more explicitly:

"Her pieces erase identity, embrace the unspeakable and value the irrational," wrote Carr, who added, "the biggest crowd-pleaser, though, was Went's giant" vagina "head-dress, which she squeezed as white liquid gushed from her mouth."

On the application upon which the NYSCA based its 1990 funding for Went, she is described as "a West Coast legend . . . well known for her explosive performances, which mix shamanistic ritual, raunchy humor and dynamic movement."

In 1985, one of the years Went was featured at the Furnace, the gallery received at least $200,000 from the NEA. NYSCA also granted $5,000, out of $10,950 requested, for the 31-performance season by 19 artists.

Frank Moore, along with Sprinkle and other local performers, performed his *Intimate Cave* show at the Furnace in May 1987. He had received an NEA fellowship in 1985. He also performed *Journey To Lila* at the Furnace last June.

Moore calls himself a "shaman" and his performance technique "Eroplay." He describes it as: "Intense physical playing and touching of oneself and each other," and "the happy, playful attitude towards life that comes from such play."

At his performances, the audience is invited into his "cave" on stage. Those who come forward then shed their clothes and pair up to touch each others' bodies under his guidance.

Last July, along with Sprinkle and 15 others, he signed a *Post-Porn Modernist Manifesto*. The signators all "celebrate sex as the nourishing, life-giving force," and they proclaimed that "we use sexually explicit words, pictures and performances to communicate our ideas and emotions."

Also performing in 1987 at the Furnace was three-time NEA fellowship recipient, Cheri Gaulke. Her show, *Virgin*, was part of an ongoing series of programs during which she used her often nude body to "explore female sexuality in relation to religion, myth, fashion and eroticism."

In this series, which she calls "part Christian worship service, part pagan ritual," her clad and unclad body has represented Eve, the serpent, a preacher, a witch and Jesus Christ.

Finley, who once claimed she was banned by Scotland Yard, also performed at the Furnace in 1985. She claims to have been boycotted by various institutions, because "sponsors are really scared that their funding is going to be taken away."

In her 1986 Kitchen performance, according to *The Drama Review*, Finley simulated incestuous trances during which a son sucks "my own cum juice outta my own mama's ass," and another where a father puts a girl in a refrigerator and "starts working my little hole."

Many people outside the avant-garde community consider this contemporary "sexual" art to be sacriligious trash, and a few think its performers should actually be charged for violating federal and state obscenity laws.

When Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., introduced legislation last year aimed at restricting public support for "obscene art," his office was deluged, he said, by thousands of citizen-letters of support.

Under the Senate appropriations bill passed last year, the NEA is prohibited from funding materials that "depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual or excretory activities or organs, including but not limited to obscene depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the sexual exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sexual intercourse."

Last week, the NEA was asked whether this law can be applied to future performances; agency spokemen have yet to respond.

These new examples of publicly-funded controversial arts come at a time when the battle over "obscene" art is heating up in Congress again, as the time for the NEA reauthorization hearings nears.

Last week the conservative weekly *Human Events* reported the NEA had recently awarded approximately $60,000 in Creative Writing Fellowships to three lesbian writers. They were among 97 American poetry and prose writers given grants for 1990.

> "Using tax dollars to fund this type of trash is an absolute outrage."
>
> —*Rep. Dana Rohrabacher*

Human Events criticized the NEA for awarding the grants because Minnie Pratt, a Native American lesbian poet, included "homoerotic" passages in her application.

According to the *Blade*, a gay weekly in Washington, the submitted passages describe lesbian lovemaking and the "touching of lips or tongue . . . to a woman's genitals."

A similar flap occurred here in 1988 after Frederic Dicker of the *New York Post* wrote that tens-of-thousands of NYSCA dollars were going to projects promoting transvestism, lesbianism and homosexuality.

Hart was summoned before the state Senate and Assembly committees responsible for the arts, but one assemblyman told the *City Tribune* that nothing happened, because Assembly Speaker "Mel Miller is a patron of the arts community."

That same elected official, who asked that he not be named, said, however, that these latest revelations could blow the top off the issue again, and that there are plenty of assemblymen who want to see serious reforms in NYCSA's funding procedures.

According to a Rohrabacher aide, representatives on Capitol Hill are considering asking that New York state loses, or has drastically reduced, its large NEA grants.

Even though many of the artists mentioned here were funded in years past, and were therefore not the responsibility of Frohnmayer, the aide said the examples will help to document a pattern of irresponsible giving.

One congressional staffer told the *Washington Post* last week that a series of rumors about possible NEA-funded grants that could become controversial has the arts community "pretty hysterical."

The *Post* reported about Sprinkle's performance, but neglected to mention any of the sexually-explicit scenes. Instead, quoting Kitchen director Bobby Tsumagari, it merely reported that the show fought "gender stereotypes and examined the ways in which sexuality is portrayed in the media."

Next: Reporter Skold interviews Annie Sprinkle.

BEHIND THIS NONDESCRIPTIVE W. 19TH STREET DOORWAY *in Chelsea, a ticketholder can enter a rather unusual continent in the world of performance art.*

VIRGIN

an art performance about virgin birth

by Cheri Gaulke with Christine Papalexis

Thursday, April 2, 8:30 p.m.
Friday, April 3, 8:30 p.m.

Franklin Furnace
112 Franklin Street, NYC, NY 10013
(212) 925-4671

IN VIRGIN, CHERI GAULKE *considered 'how to have a baby without a man.' The printed program acknowledged 'gratefully' funds from the NEA, the NYSCA and the Jerome Foundation paid for the performance.*

1990

Wild In The Streets: Artist Frank Moore!

Caption & Photography By Dave Patrick

Talk about sticking out in a crowd: At noon on Thursday, August 2, performance artist Frank Moore will leave his wheelchair near the Montgomery Street BART station, inviting passersby to touch him. To add a little icing on the cake, Moore will be surrounded by semi-nude men and women wearing nothing more than net costumes.

"It's all part of Frank's show, 'Out of Isolation,' the story of an institutionalized person who the doctors believe has no mental capacities. Of course, the doctors are wrong and this is discovered by a physical therapist, who works with the patient and eventually has sex with him," explains his wife and co-conspirator, Linda.

Moore and company will also be part of The Artist's Parade from Berkeley BART to Sather Gate on August 3 at 4 p.m. "The Combine Plot," which explains much of Frank's motivation for his work, will be read by poet Jack Foley. The events on both days are part of "Swampfest West," a celebration of Bay Area artists, writers and poets.

NORTH WEST Artists WORKSHOP NEWS

FEBRUARY 1989

EROTIC 89

This is our annual juried theme show for (more or less) tasteful representations of the depths of erotic experience. The Erotic Show is one of the funkiest big events in the local art scene. Entries come from artists in all media. Any number of concepts of eroticism can be found, from the profound to the pronographic. The amount of work, if not its subject matter, is staggering. Jurors this year include Christine Clark and Brian Shannon of the Workshop, Christopher Ley (video artist), Dr. Hugo Maynard (professor of Pcyhology at PSU), and Melinda Thorsnes (painter).

The opening and Valentines Party are hugely popular. Art brats, hangers-on, several European counts, the obligatory greasy men in trench coats, and YOU discover that, indeed, THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY at this show. Door prizes will be raffled at 9:00 on the evening of the Party, 2/14 (admission at the opening 2/2 also buys a raffle ticket). Prizes include: dinner for two at **L'Auberge**, three pairs of film tickets for **NW Film & Video Center**, coupon for one free extension class at **Pacific NW College of Art**, lunch for two at **Crepe Faire**, a gift certificate from **Thirty-One Northwest**, a gift certificate from **Cafe Des Amis**, four $25 gift cetificates from **Art Media**, several gift certificates from **Powells Books**, and a gift certificate from **Music Millenium**. We've been assured that there will NOT be a repeat of last year's now-famous arrest of Sasha Samuels for failing to restrain the crowds of supplicants who proclaimed her divinity.

In addition to the gallery exhibition and receptions, several related events are scheduled for February:

"UNDERSTATEMENTS: ARTISTS MAKE UNDERWEAR": A juried show of--that's right--under-wear. Mounted in the East Gallery in conjunction with the Erotic Show. Functional, non-functional, two- or three-dimensional, altered, or whatever--UNDERWEAR. No size limitations (within reason).

FRANK MOORE: Performance artist from Berkeley. 2/17 and 2/18. See related article.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Group critique of selected works in the Erotic show, conducted by a panel of artists, critics, and professionals. It's expected that the critique will encompass discussion of issues such as pornography, exploitation of women, and definitions of eroticism. Portions of the critique will be open to audience comments and questions. DON'T MISS THIS! Saturday, 18 February from 1pm to 3pm. $1 voluntary admission.

Costs for printing this newsletter supported, in part, by a generous donation from CLEAN COPY.

FRANK MOORE

Berkeley artist and writer Frank Moore comes to the Workshop for two nights of live, very unusual performance art on February 17th and 18th. Afflicted with cerebral palsy, unable to move or converse without the aid of friends and special equipment, Frank is a bright and sensitive person with a remarkable knack for communication and teaching. His work is a cathartic, sensual liberation which he dubs "eroplay". Drawing heavily on his own experience of sexuality, Frank's work elicits an understanding of physical happiness which separates sensual states from mind games and sexual hangups.

Frank and a company of seven will perform a piece called "Inner Traveling", which he describes as "a mythic erotic ritual that creates a magical reality." Frank leads the audience in an attempt to create a collective mental image of a utopia of play and illusion. The collective image is given the name "Lila". When the sense of place and identity is established, the group is invited to make a voyage of discovery to this mythic place. The "old" self is allowed to fade away and, by a series of experiential rituals of death, rebirth, and childhood, viewers and participants find themselves in the bodies of playful, innocent teenage Lilans who know no isolation or limitations. Through more rituals, the group can experience and experiment with this new way of being and relating. Finally, sadly, it's time to come home, but not without some lasting sense of liberation and fulfilment.

This program cannot be recomended to the timid. Frank assures us that there's nothing dirty about it, and that in fact those who expect to find a reason to call the vice squad are often the ones who find and express the greatest joy in seeing and being a part of the fun. Really, that's the point of this very important work, and we wish we could invite all of our crusty, uptight friends and neighbors. But if you think you might never forgive us for letting people (maybe even you) take off all their clothes, please think twice before you buy a ticket.

Shows are at 8pm on Friday and Saturday, February 17th & 18th. Tickets are $6 for general admission, $4 for members. As always, we'll give two admissions and full membership benefits for the price of a membership ($20).

NWAW DIRECTORS

Allen Barrett
Michael Bowley (President, Treasurer)
Christine Clark (Exhibition Committee Chair)
Geoff Clark
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Cynthia Nawalinski
Claudia Nix
Brian Shannon
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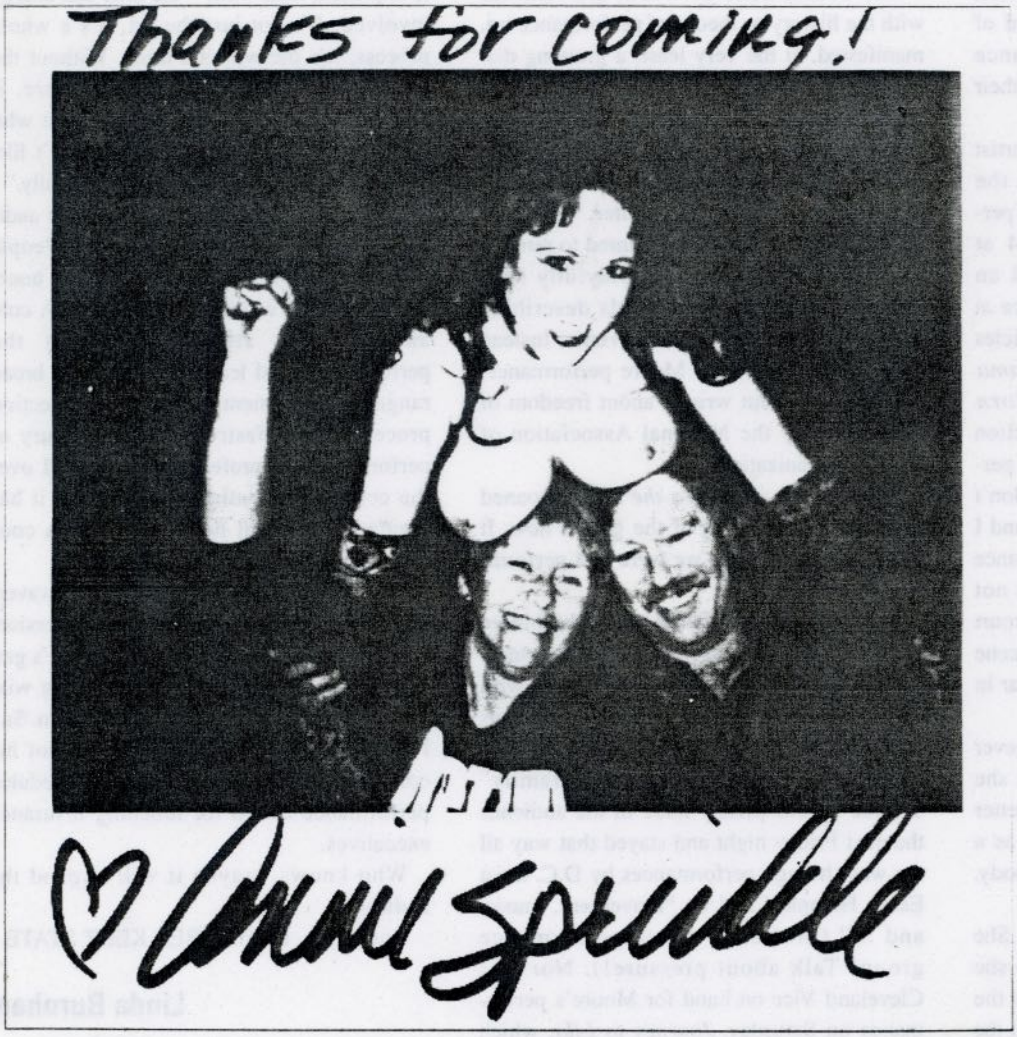
Sara Whiteley (Performance Committee Chair)

We need more Board Members. If you would like to share in the work of presenting Portland's most challenging and exciting art, come by the gallery between noon and 5:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday, for a look at our Bylaws and Board orientation kit.

running commentary

Remember 1970 when the state of Ohio executed Kent State students for threatening establishment values? That was the day the Revolution got serious. We should have learned our lesson: don't fuck with the state of Ohio. It's happening all over again, and this time it's the art world.

First it was Cincinnati, where they want to jail a museum director for showing photographs. Now it's Cleveland, where the law came down on performance art.



This photo is against the law. Pictured: Performance artist Annie Sprinkle at the Cleveland Performance Art Festival with *High Performance* Editor Steven Durland and yours truly in the ACT UP T-shirt.

It's clear that art is not allowed any power in the "real world" of the general public. As long as we stay in our art ghettos, all we have to deal with is the public-funding question. Once we get up in their face, it's going to be prison or worse. Artist Frank Moore calls it "the plot of bigness." As long as we stay small, poor and invisible, we're pretty safe.

Here's how the big rumble went down in Cleveland. The third annual Cleveland Public Theater Performance Art Festival, April 11–May 25, 1990 ("the largest performance art festival in the galaxy") was scheduled to open with a major piece by the internationally renown Rachel Rosenthal. Rosenthal cancelled at the last minute because she broke two bones in her back, and festival director Tom Mulready decided to replace her with New York artist Annie Sprinkle. When the local law got wind of Sprinkle's impending performance of *Post Porn Modernist*, all hell broke loose, and all because of advertising.

Tom Mulready only wanted to expand his audience. That's why he advertised in the local papers that Annie's performance would include an exploration of "her own sexual history with a probing, in-depth look at her cervix." That plus the news in his press release that Annie is not only a performance artist but a porn photographer, porn editor, ex-porn-film star, ex-prostitute and ex-stripper.

His audience expanded all right. Thanks to front-page stories, TV commentary and the six-o'clock news, the two performances (which also included Blue Man Group, an exciting but noncontroversial group of artists from New York) sold out to standing room. But the audience included two vice cops and a judge.

The cops were there to make sure nothing obscene happened. They were expecting Annie to insert a speculum into her vagina

and invite the audience to inspect her cervix, as she had at The Kichen in New York in January. It was this performance that put her on the now-famous hit list of Jesse Helms, Dana Rohrabacher and the *New York Tribune*, swimming in the "river of filth" along with other notorious swimmers like Karen Finley, Johanna Went, Frank Moore and Cheri Gaulke.

Such action with a speculum would constitute "insertion," which is illegal in sex shows in Cleveland. If she did it, she was assured of arrest, as were Mulready and the rest of his filthy collaborators, Jim Levin (executive director of the Cleveland Public Theater), and the president of the festival board of directors. Even before the performance began, the Ohio Arts Council asked that their support be removed from publicity.

Now, Ms. Sprinkle is a writer and an artist with a degree in photography from the School of Visual Arts in New York. Her performance art career began in 1984 at Franklin Furnace and has included an appearance in a Richard Schechner piece at the Performing Garage and extensive articles in *High Performance* and *The Drama Review*. A description of *Post Porn Modernist* is included in the review section of this issue. I went to Cleveland for this performance, and performance art critics don't come any more credentialed than I do, and I declare it: Annie Sprinkle is a performance artist and this performance was art, not pornography. I'd be glad to say it in a court of law. It wasn't anywhere near as obscene as homelessness or our support of the war in El Salvador. Not by half.

Most significantly, Ms. Sprinkle has never been threatened with arrest as long as she stayed in the porno ghetto, but she'd better not try to take power in the art world as a woman who enjoys sex and loves her body. At least not in Ohio.

For Annie, the whole thing blew over. She declined to commit insertion because she had been invited to perform in Europe the following week and she wanted to go. At the second performance on Saturday night she was also requested by the law not to repeat a Friday post-performance session in which she was photographed with her bare breasts arranged on top of the heads of audience members (for $5). This constituted audience touching, also a forbidden act in sex shows.

Mulready was worried about the rest of the festival, and for good reason. In two weeks he was expecting Frank Moore, a San Francisco artist whose art form, *Eroplay*, has been known to get the whole audience into the act stark naked. He called an emergency board meeting to brace them for Frank Moore, and found himself faced with an angry group of people who were expressing what Mulready now calls overreaction to what was actually a small amount of outside pressure.

The board, none of whom are familiar with the history or theory of performance art, manifested, at the very least, a growing discomfort with the art form. They now want approval of jurors for the festival. The discomfort spread. Funders wanted disclaimers in ads, dropping support for the festival or limiting it to the Public Theater. The festival's development director wanted to remove the word "sexual" that had playfully been inserted by Mulready into ads describing upcoming music and poetry events. Instead of an ad for the Frank Moore performance, he ran a statement written about freedom of expression by the National Association of Artists' Organizations.

"It's not the work, *it's the ads*," moaned Mulready. "We're out of the ghetto now. It was a lot easier when we were just performing for each other."

Mulready decided not to cancel the Moore visit and let the chips fall where they may. Ironically, there was no trouble at all with the law. They didn't seem to know what was going on and weren't on hand to protect Cleveland when Moore and his "family" showed up completely nude in the audience the next Friday night and stayed that way all the way through performances by D.C. artist Essex Hemphill and by "movement, music, and ..." (Mulready's own performance group! Talk about pressure!). Nor was Cleveland Vice on hand for Moore's performance on Saturday, *Journey to Lila*, which lasted for eight-and-a-half hours and featured, finally, the whole audience semi-nude and groping each other on the floor of the artspace.

"It was back to the old normal apathy," said Mulready in disbelief.

So it goes.

In any case, the fire had already been lit beneath the pot of interior controversy, and fundingwise the festival is in hot water in Cleveland.

Mulready is a man of two minds about all this. A writer and musician himself, he is invested in performance art, but also in his organization.

"We've damaged things here," he told me after the Moore performance. "Artists come and go, but they don't realize how difficult it is to present their work—the time and energy involved. It's not just the art, it's a whole process, it's the way it's done. Without the support of everyone in the structure, it doesn't work. There are people here who were ambivalent that now firmly don't like what we're doing—funders, board, family."

On the plus side, Mulready sees his audience expanding in a positive way. People have been driving from as far as five hours away for other events in the festival. A core audience has attended most of the performances and learned to look at a broad range of experimental work. The selection process for the festival involved a jury of performance art professionals from all over the country (including myself), and it has created a national network of folks concerned and informed about the festival.

If it sounds like Tom Mulready is wavering in his fidelity to freedom of expression, I'm not too worried. At this writing, he's getting ready to send High Risk Group, a wild bunch of gay activists/dancers from San Francisco, to the lunchroom of one of his corporate sponsors to create an unscheduled performance action for lunching insurance executives.

Who knows, maybe it will expand the audience.

But, hey... REMEMBER KENT STATE.

Linda Burnham

HIGH PERFORMANCE
A Quarterly Magazine for the New Arts
#51 Fall 1990

cleveland

Performance Art Festival 1990

Various Artists

While many of "movement, music, and..."'s concepts were trite and simplistic, their often inventive treatment lifted them out of cliché. An added boost to their performance was the unforeseen presence of "deformed shaman" Frank Moore and his Chero group, sitting naked in the audience, desexualizing the body in a way that they do so well.

In an eight-hour ritual in which between 20 and 50 participated, Frank Moore and his group spread their message of love and "eroplay" to a very willing audience. For those who committed to the full night of the Frank Moore experience, it was transformative. More ritual than performance, more philosophy than script, their *Journey to Lila* was unique and worthy of its own lengthier and independent debate. What Frank Moore is doing is beyond performance. He is thwarting nature in an astonishing manner, and fusing art, ritual and religion in ways the Eurocentric world has only dim memories of. Espousing a kind of paganism without bite and without sexual aggression, Frank Moore is indeed worth watching.

—Amy Sparks

Performed at Cleveland Public Theatre in Cleveland, April 12-May 26, 1990.

Amy Sparks is a Cleveland-based writer whose contributions have appeared in *New Art Examiner, Dialogue, American Poetry Review* and others.

THE CHICAGO NEWS & ARTS WEEKLY • FREE • OCTOBER 11 - OCTOBER 17, 1990

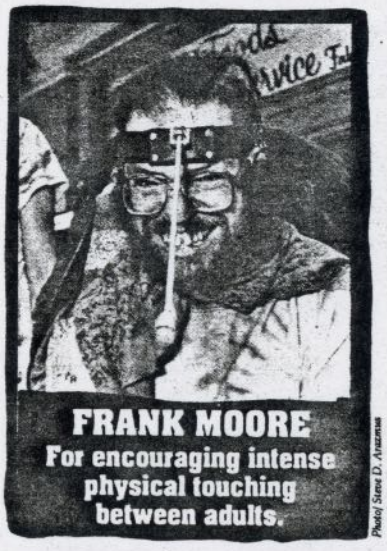
NEW CITY

WANTED!

THE NEW BARBARIANS

Alias (Art Outlaws, Performance Artists)

ANNIE SPRINKLE
For showing audiences her cervix through a speculum.



Photo/ Steve D. Anzenis

FRANK MOORE
For encouraging intense physical touching between adults.

Photo/Dona Ann McAdams

KAREN FINLEY
For covering her body with foodstuffs.

Film Fest Guide • A Band Of Farmers • Now Weekly!

COVER STORY

OUTLAW ARTISTS

Porn? Play? Or Immoral Plot?

Story by JACK HELBIG

To conservative art critic Hilton Kramer, they are the "New Barbarians...licensed rebels at the taxpayers' expense." To Jesse Helms' rally Rep. Dana Rohrbacher (R-Calif.), they are a threat to the established moral order. They are the NEA outlaws, controversial artists the conservatives would dearly love to silence. Three of these outlaw artists — Karen Finley, Frank Moore and Annie Sprinkle — will be performing in Chicago this month.

Of the three, Karen Finley is by now the best known, thanks in part to NEA Chairman John Frohnmayer's awkward defunding of her work, and in part to conservative columnists Evans and Novak who labeled her as "the chocolate-covered woman." (One wonders what they'd be calling her, if the right wing had been hip to Finley when she was performing "Yams Up My Grandma's Ass.")

Her fame has come quickly. Less than a year ago, only the alternative press followed Finley. Even when her shows at the Edge of the Lookingglass sold out every night, the dailies hardly noted her presence in town. Now on her triumphant return (for a four-week run at The Beacon Street Gallery), after a summer's worth of press (over)-exposure, she has received long stories in *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago* magazine.

Frank Moore and Annie Sprinkle are unlikely to receive such coverage. For one, both artists' work resists the easy and superficial descriptions that Finley's work had always attracted. Even Sprinkle's bit in which the audience is invited to take a peek at Sprinkle's cervix through a speculum is too gross to inspire, on retelling, the sort of ironic "oh yeah?" grins that Finley's bits involving covering her body with this, that or the other foodstuff do.

For another, both Moore's and Sprinkle's work challenge the consensus view more strongly and in ways less acceptable than Karen Finley's angry tirades and bitter attacks on consumer culture (whose time has come). Sprinkle's sexually provocative performances, involving sex toys, onstage masturbation, and parodies of oral sex involving rubber dildos, have provoked attacks by both the right and the left (feminists of the Andrea Dworkin variety), neither of whom see much difference between real pornography and Sprinkle's "Post-Porn" deconstructions of the genre.

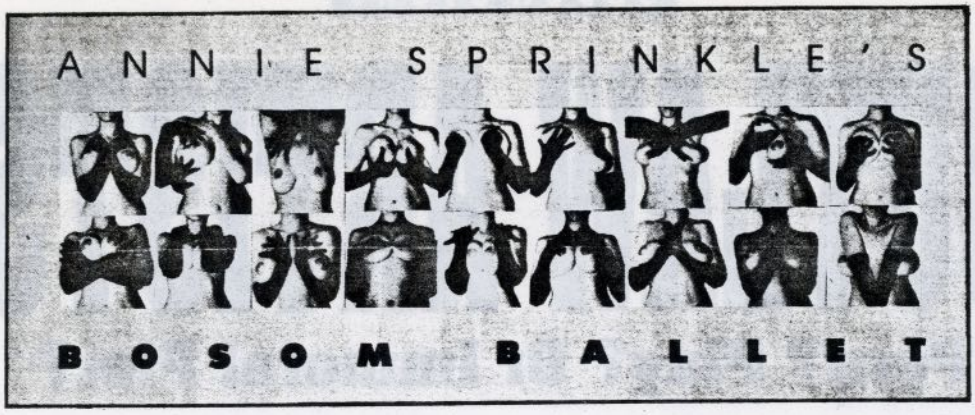
As an admitted former prostitute and porn star, Annie Sprinkle's world view seems tremendously at odds with an increasingly hung-up America. Even the Post-Porn Manifesto, written by fellow performance artist Veronica Vera and signed by Sprinkle in large John Hancockish script, seems like a relic from the pre-AIDs sexual liberality of the late '70s.

Topped by two erect penises saluting an open vagina, the manifesto reads: "We of the POST-PORN MODERNIST MOVE-MENT... celebrate sex as the nourishing life-giving force. We embrace our genitals as part, not separate, from our spirits. We utilize sexually explicit words, pictures and performances to communicate our ideas and emotions. We denounce sexual censorship as anti-art and inhuman...And in this love of our sexual selves we have fun, heal the world and endure."

No wonder Rep. Rohrbacher, anxious to find the artist who could do for him what Mapplethorpe did for Sen. Helms, thought Annie Sprinkle an easy target. In February of this year, he launched his attack on the "feminist porn activist" by telling the House of Representatives that Sprinkle was "the recipient of taxpayer funds for her live sex act show in New York." "Actually," wrote C. Carr in *Village Voice*, "she has never received or applied for a grant of any kind. ...Neither did she perform a 'live sex act.'"

It seems Rep. Rohrbacher based

Photo: Steve D. Arazmes



"If this community doesn't want me to... have an orgasm from breathing on stage, I'm not going to rub it in their faces."

his whole attack on Sprinkle articles published in the ultra-conservative *New York City Tribune* and the supermarket tabloid *National Enquirer*. *National Enquirer* proved to be an especially dubious source for information, since it based its allegation that Sprinkle had received NEA funding for her work on a one-liner Sprinkle quipped in the middle of her performance: "Usually I get paid a lot of money for this, but tonight it's government funded." Sprinkle, it turns out, was just joking.

However, the fact that his accusations were baseless didn't keep Rohrbacher from, again in the words of C. Carr, "sending a letter headlined: The National Endowment for the Arts Is At It Again! to every member of the House, describing Sprinkle's show" in detail. Nor did it keep John Frohnmayer from leaping into the fray and issuing the odd statement that "if the performance by Ms. Sprinkle was accurately described in recent media reports, then it is something that would not have been funded by the Endowment."

When asked about Rohrbacher's attack, Sprinkle's reaction is surprising. "I refuse to let anyone make me a victim, " she says in a surprisingly girlish and innocent voice, "especially people like that... these people like Jesse Helms have only heard about what I do. They're totally misinformed... They just have no idea what my work is really like, or what its about. But that's okay. I'm really happy with the way things are moving along. I'm really, really much more appreciated here in Europe. I get 100 times more money. A hundred times more offers. The people who don't see [my work], don't understand performance art, don't see sexuality anywhere near the way I see it, they have a problem [with my work]."

I asked Sprinkle if Rohrbacher's attack had in any way affected where she can perform. Sprinkle denied that it had, mentioning only that she had gotten "a lot of publicity" but still had been able to do her show unimpeded. However, half way through her denial she remembered one incident on her recent tour. "So I don't feel — uh, in Cleveland, Ohio, there were police in the audience who would've arrested me," if Sprinkle had invited the audience to take a peek at her cervix. "So there was a blatant case of censorship. But I think there *is* a such thing as community standards. If this community doesn't want me to..." Sprinkle pauses as if unsure how I'm going to take what she's about to say, and then continues speaking a little too quickly, "have an orgasm from breathing on stage, I'm not going to rub it in their faces. I go where I'm appreciated and wanted. And it's fine with me that there are states and cities and people who don't want to see what I do....I don't see it as them against me. I see it as we are all one, and I love them, and its all quite perfect, you know?"

Sprinkle's laissez-faire attitude about the right wing's attacks on her art is in marked contrast to her buddy Frank Moore's reaction, who is absolutely livid about the treatment he's received lately by Helms and Company. "If you have anything to say to me or to ask me," Moore wrote in an open letter to Helms, published in *High Performance* magazine, "come to talk to me man to man. Otherwise, get your big brother foot off my back."

Of course, Helms' campaign against Moore has been considerably more subtle than Rohrbacher's blatant, baseless, and almost farcical assault on Annie Sprinkle. It seems that, according to *Los Angeles Times*, Helms demanded that the General Accounting Office inquire into the work of four performance artists: Karen Finley, Frank Moore, Johanna Went and Cheri Gaulke. As part of the GAO's investigation, the GAO "sent letters to the Franklin Furnace and the Kitchen (two of New York City's most prominent alternative performance spaces) formally requesting information on appearances since 1984 by these four artists.

This was not the first time that Finley, Moore, Went and Gaulke had found their very different works lumped together. Around the same time that Rohrbacher was accusing Sprinkle of the misuse of public funds, *New York City Tribune* (which is, itself, funded by Rev. Moon's Unification Church) began a series investigating the "obscene" art of, that's right, Finley, Moore, Went, and Gaulke.

The connection between Rohrbacher and *New York City Tribune* is well documented; Rohrbacher's press secretary David Eisner, admitted they had gathered information about Sprinkle from the *Tribune*. And the connection between the *Tribune* articles and the Helms' requested GAO investigation is clear.

Still, Frank Moore would seem an odd choice for Helms to pick on. Born with cerebral palsy, Frank Moore is not only wheelchair bound, he is also unable to control his arms or legs and incapable of making any sound except a kind of howling yelp. It is Frank Moore's conviction that Sen. Helms just plain doesn't know he's a disabled artist. (A fact the *New York City Tribune* article on Moore also failed to mention.) Which is why Moore is so anxious to meet Helms "man to man."

After all, Moore *can* communicate. Thanks in part to a device Moore developed when he was a teenager that allows him to paint, operate a personal computer, or, during interviews, spell out what he wants to say one letter at a time.

We start off talking about whether being on Helms' list hurt bookings for Frank Moore's performances. Moore spells out the answer: "They have closed Franklin Furnace." Linda Mac, long-time companion and fellow performer adds, "The [New York] Fire Department closed down the performance space and said it was not up to standards. So galleries are reluctant to book us because they see what happened to Franklin Furnace and they see what's happening to the Kitchen and they don't want to have to go through that."

Frank adds, "except clubs like Lower Links. I am lucky. I always have done grassroots—" "Galleries," Linda Mac pipes in, "Is that right?"

Frank grins his toothy grin and yelps.

Mac continues: "Places that don't get NEA money. In Seattle we performed at a place — A.F.L.N.(A Flimsy Lace Nightie) — that pays its bills by selling coffee and toast during the day. On the one hand we don't make very much money. But we always have places to perform."

What could Moore have done to bring down the wrath of Helms? Certainly, Helms can't be upset about "The Outrageous Horror Show" (which Frank and his troupe will perform at Lower Links). In this show, Moore confronts the audience by "singing" (howling, really) a number of rock standards "for one or two hours." "Moore jokes, "Maybe Helms doesn't like my singing."

Frank Moore suspects that it is "Eroplay," a form of performance he has developed, involving "intense physical touching between adults without limits but is non-sexual." Often performed nude, and involving audience participation, it has been described by Moore in the Spring 1989 *Drama Review* as being "fun...innocent and childlike!" Unfortunately, just how innocent Eroplay seems depends upon your definition of innocence. Certainly, anyone hoping to find obscene art could call Eroplay obscene. "In my work," Moore writes in the same essay, "I always have used nudity and physical acts which most people would call sexual." Though Moore makes the point that "Eroplay is a safe, fun, lusty, channel for physical touching" which does not lead to "physical intercourse," many of the photos of Eroplay in performance could pass for group grope sessions.

The question of obscenity, however, is just a smokescreen, Moore believes. In his essay, "The Combine Plot," (published in the current issue of *P-Form*), Moore argues that "The real goal of Helms' and Rohrbacher's attacks is to make all art, not just the N.E.A.-funded art, the agent for the established order, to deball art, to tame down all art. ...The message is clear: eliminate controversial, experimental, and avant-garde art."

(Karen Finley will be performing "We Keep Our Victims Ready" at Beacon Street Gallery, 361-3500, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, October 5-28 at 8. Frank Moore will perform his "Outrageous Horror Show" at Club Lower Links, Thursday, October 11, at 7. Annie Sprinkle's "Sex Education Class" will take place at Club Lower Links, Saturday, October 20, at 7 and 9. To make reservations for Frank Moore and Annie Sprinkle call 248-5238)

Photo: Dona Ann McAdams

Karen Finley

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SCENE

Berkeley artist under investigation

By Kristen Russell

One of Berkeley's best-known artists may be in trouble with the law.

Frank Moore, a performance artist and self-described "deformed shaman," learned early last February that the General Accounting Office —the investigative arm of Congress — has been asking questions about him.

Stage

And Moore, cerebral palsy victim, a spastic quadriplegic, 99 percent physically disabled, is flattered.

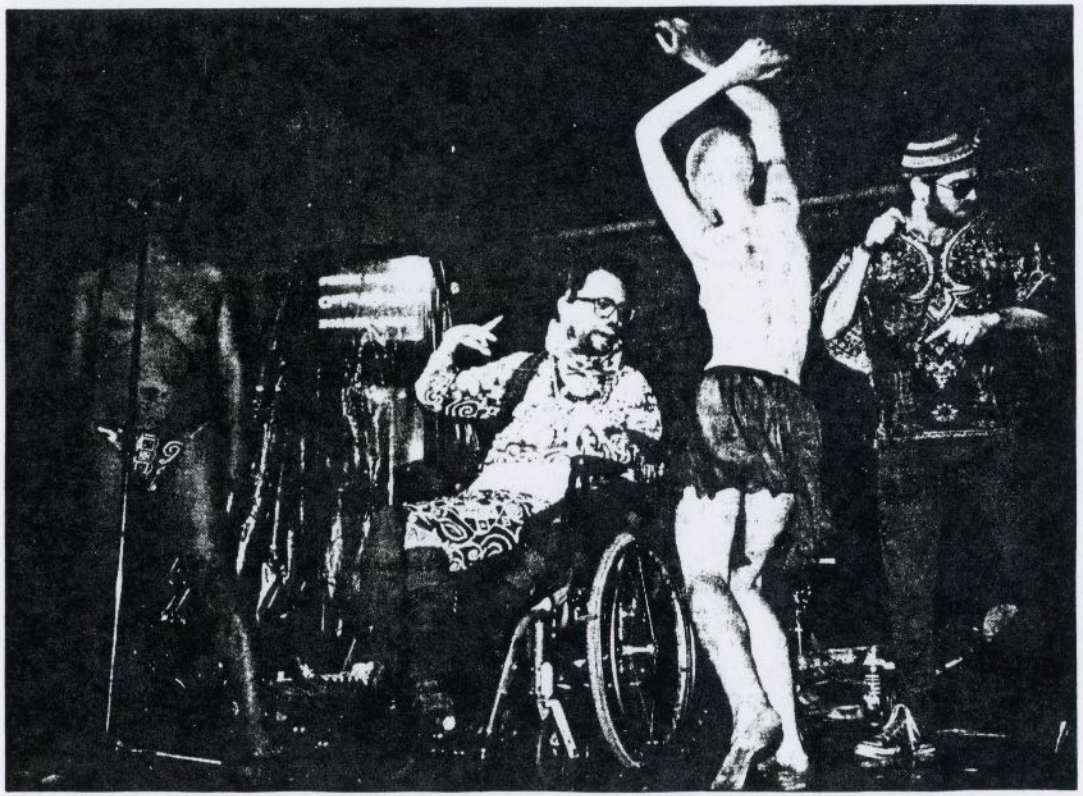
"I was feeling left out," he said. "All of my heroes in the past were banned, jailed, harassed for their work."

Moore is one of four performance artists being investigated by the GAO as the result of a demand by U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-North Carolina).

Helms has been loudly criticizing the National Endowment for the Arts for funding performers whose works some consider obscene.

Under a recently passed Senate appropriations bill the NEA endowment is prohibited from funding "patently offensive" material.

Helms is now targeting individual artists, among them Moore, Annie Sprinkle, Karen Finley, and Cheri Gaulke. Moore has not received an endowment since 1985.



The Outrageous Horror Show of performance artist Frank Moore, pictured center, with the Chero Company in Los Angeles

Moore can neither walk nor talk. He communicates by pointing a stick attached to a headband at letters on a board, laboriously spelling out words.

Despite his disability he is also an accomplished painter, who has had shows in Chicago and Berkeley, and the author of a new book, "Cherotic Magic." He is also a rock star and poet.

"I am lucky I am an exhibitionist in this body," Moore said. "It is not a disability, it is my tool, my meal ticket."

Controversy is no stranger to Moore, whose performances often span eight hours and involve, among other things, nudity and the use of what Moore calls shamanistic rituals.

At the heart of Moore's performances is "eroplay," Moore's made-up name for intimate and playful touching between adults, which, he emphasizes, is non-sexual in nature.

Eroplay often entails some or most of the audience participating, either partially or completely naked.

"By using eroplay," he said, "the innocent child within the body is released in a playful energy. Within this altered reality intense emotions can be released, intense acts can be performed, outside the normal slots."

By encouraging audience members to shed their clothes and participate in non-touching exercises, Moore said he is creating a playground where adults can feel safe in being vulnerable.

"I think playing is a safe, mind-altering drug," he said.

In Moore's production "Wrapping/Rocking," he sits in his wheelchair, a woman on each lap, both of them naked. Several members of the troupe, including Linda Mac, Moore's companion, wrap the two in toilet paper, Saran Wrap and tin foil.

Other performances feature Moore as a rock star, howling to rock standards while members of his group eroplay and dance naked and oiled under strobe lights.

They throw glitter in the air, and paint each other with chocolate and whipped cream.

"I wonder why Helms is after me," Moore said.

But the simple issue of nudity and erotica are not the foundations of Helms' objections, Moore said; governmental suppression of art is motivated by the need to control threatening visionaries.

Moore said his art is "freeing people; that is threatening. It is also using shamanism; that is threatening. It is also minorities finding channels for change; that is threatening; What is threatening to Helms is not the sex or the gore," Moore said, "it is that if I can be a rock star, anybody can do anything they want to do."

Moore's next Berkeley performance will be Feb. 8, 1991, at Smokey Joe's Cafe on Shattuck Avenue. A 24-hour performance is scheduled for Jan. 26; those interested should phone 540-0907 for an interview.

Frank bathes with the help of his wife Linda (left) and a member of the acting troop, Leigh.

In his art, Frank Moore searches for a physical rapture much deeper than orgasm

Frank and his troop of actors huddle for warmth. Left to right: Leigh, Frank, Mike, Alexie, Linda.

It's a cold day and Frank Moore is sitting in his wheelchair on a Berkeley sidewalk. His friends huddle around him, forming a barrier to the wind, leaving Moore in the center of a warm circle.

A passerby stops for a moment to comment jokingly, "What I don't understand is how you get so much attention." As he walks away, Moore, who is spastic and unable to speak, laboriously taps out a response on an alphabet board attached to his wheelchair. With a fool-long pointer strapped to his forehead, he slowly, letter-by-letter, forms the words, "You have to make them pay attention."

Moore is a performance artist with shows that have a heavy concentration on erotic content. At the very least, they catch people's attention.

The friends that encircle him are his troup of fellow performers. They've traveled throughout the country, startling and enticing audiences with the sexuality of their acts. And they've sent many people shuffling uncomfortably out the door, because Moore dosen't want audiences to sit passively and watch. He wants his audiences to participate.

There's no sexual intercourse at Moore's shows. Sex is an aspect of erotic art that he distrusts. He searches for a physical rapture that's somehow deeper than orgasm: deep enough to increase interpersonal trust and decrease personal isolation. In his art, he tries to craft a passageway to this elusive rapture.

Moore has been involved in erotic art since the early '70s, running the gamut from paintings to videos to performance. Since then, Moore has completed an M.A. in psychology and an M.F.A. in performance/video. He has published articles, lectured, and directed performances across the country. In 1985, he received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Born with cerebral palsy, he once wrote:

I do not function that well in the social, political, casual, sexual, economical, competitive world. So I look to performance to create a world of community, intimacy, and human interaction. For me, art is a matter of survival.

Moore's experience with erotic art began when he was attending college in San Bernardino in the late '60s. He received the school's permission to put on an all-nude play. "I was over-focused on sex at the time," he explains. "But I wasn't really into sex yet in my art. I just wanted to see nude bodies on stage and do things like paint them with baby food."

When nobody wanted to be in the play, he learned that "it can be hard to get people to do weird things."

For a while he moved from one group home to another, living in Massachusetts, and finally settling in Santa Fe, N.M., where he took his next step in erotic art. He had been painting with oils for years, utilizing a brush strapped to his forehead. One day a woman asked him to paint a nude portrait of her. As she undressed for the painting, Moore realized that art can give people permission to do what normally is forbidden.

Soon after, Moore began sitting in a public plaza with a sign taped to his wheelchair that said "I don't want money, I want you." He asked people to sit for paintings, but soon stopped painting because he said it became too static. Instead, he asked people to "act out intensive erotic scenes" with him in private.

Some responded, and he noticed changes when they took off their clothes; they relaxed and talked on a deeper level about personal things. These private performances became the backbone for the art he does today. Moore once wrote about his private performances:

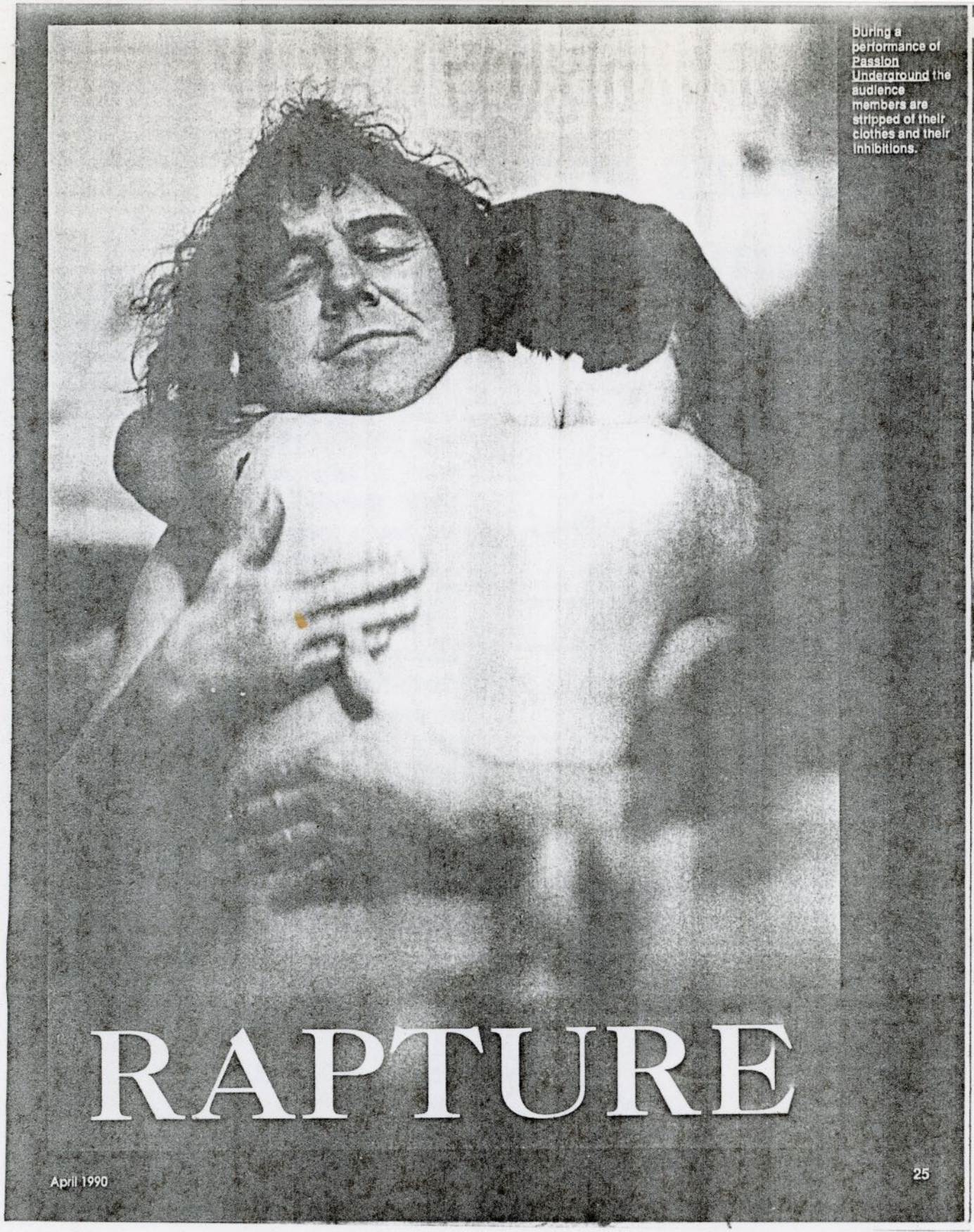
"It is something too silly, too taboo, too sacred, too intense, too raw, too vulnerable to be done in public, to be expressed. This may be where real art begins."

Moore formed a drop-in workshop in which groups of people would perform erotic rituals that sometimes lasted for hours. After a year, he developed an informal group of core performers committed enough to move to New York City with him. In 1974, the group moved to Berkeley, where they found a permanent home.

His art has modulated and grown through many different forms. At one time his core group was 30 people strong. Now he works with a smaller group of four. In their private lives they have an intimate communal relationship, and they provide the center for his performances.

Moore feels he doesn't control his art. His group performances are a part of his growth and the audience's. To him, the performances don't begin or end, they reach into his life and shape it into an evolving vision. ▲

Photos and Story by Kevin Rice



during a performance of Passion Underground the audience members are stripped of their clothes and their inhibitions.

RAPTURE

Shamans and Endangered Species at CPT

The Performance Art Festival begins

By Amy Sparks

Both Jeff McMahon and Clara Crokett were awarded $1000 Performance Art Festival Showcase Awards for their past and future work. The third Showcase Award was given to the oddest thing on wheels, and surely the strangest performance Cleveland is likely to see for a long time: "Journey to Lila" by **FRANK MOORE** on April 28 (he has the whole night to himself).

"I am interested in art that causes change, that heals, that threatens, that unites, that subverts, that destroys limits and breaks taboos," says Frank Moore who describes himself as a "deformed shaman." The audience on April 28 will be Moore's guests on a "trance-reality" journey to "Lila," the island of play and illusion. The audience (voluntarily) will be led one-by-one, blindfolded, into the "Dream Cave." A five-hour evening not for the timid, April 28 will prove to be a special night, if only for the reason that Frank Moore is wheel-chair bound and speechless with cerebral palsy.

A ritualistic performer, writer and teacher for 17 years, Moore has received much acclaim and an NEA fellowship for his work. If performance art has radical edge, it has to be Frank Moore.

APRIL 19, 1990
THE CLEVELAND EDITION

the COMBINE PLOT

by Frank Moore

For months I have been thinking about writing a piece about what I call the plot of fragmentation. It would be about the aspect of the plot that focuses on making us think that to do anything meaningful, to be an effective force for change, you have to reach a large number of people, commonly known as **the masses** or **the mass market**. I was going to talk about how this aspect of the plot has limited art by making artists and galleries think that to reach this mass market, or at least a fraction of it, artists have to reach levels of educational, technical, and marketing skills which are set by, and are acceptable to, the real world of mass communications.

"There is a martial arts principle that when you are attacked, that is the point when you have the most force potential. This is because you can combine the opposing force with your own, and reshape this new, more powerful force into your advantage."

Moreover, the subject matter was set to certain "in fashion" areas such as AIDS, feminism, the homeless, the environment, etc....What are "in fashion" subjects keep changing every six months or a year. (Obviously, the homeless people did not get homes nor did people stop dying of AIDS....Rather, the glamor attention span wears off and the focus quickly switches before things crack through the surface into the uncomfortable depth of universals where issues explode, leaving us trying to live together.)

This aspect of the plot leads artists on a chase of college degrees, of skills to operate high tech art-making machines, of money or positions that will give them the opportunity to do art, even when the style, the subject matter, and maybe even the content of the art is dictated by this chase, by the combine plot.

This is what I was planning to write about. I was going to call it **the PLOT OF BIGNESS.** But the plot has overtaken me during my thinking about the article. I see in the press that Sen. Jesse Helms and Rep. Dana Rohrabacher have nominated me, along with Annie Sprinkle, Karen Finley, Johanna Went, Cheri Gaulke, as well as other unnamed artists, to be their next target in their war on art. By doing so, Dana and Jesse have given us artists a platform from which to fight the plot. Because doing battle with the combine plot is one of the main functions of the artist, I am flattered to be nominated as one of the top ten on the new McCarthy Hit List. I was feeling left out. All my heroes in the past were banned, jailed, harassed for their work. Artists, such as Finley, who I respect, have been fighting the censors off for years. My ego was crushed when I saw Rohrabacher on CNN label Annie Sprinkle a threat to the established moral order. After all, my work is as threatening as hers. but days later, someone sent me the **New York City Tribune** (Feb. 5) special report that named names, and mine was there. What a relief! I only wish Dana or Jesse had invited me to testify. Jesse, I am available.

I know the last paragraph sounds like light humor...not taking the war seriously. It is a serious war with the high stakes of freedom and liberty for everyone. But you must understand the nature of the combine plot. It does not understand humor or the personal level. It operates on the mass level. It can crush you if you operate by the mass rules and try to fight it on its terms. But once you drop out of the mass headset, the plot becomes very fragile, very threatened. This is why the plot's Helms is after me and you. Because of this, my article is forced to take on a larger scope and a certain nonlinear quality. Please bear with it.

To understand what is really going on under this "sex" witch-hunt, it is important to understand the nature of the general plot of fragmentation, the combine plot. I took the word "combine" from the novel **ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST** by Ken Kesey. In the book, the combine is a fear machine network which secretly installed pacemakers of fear, doubt, and mistrust in almost everyone in childhood. This made people much easier to control. It isolates people into cells padded with fear and doubt, making the people a part of the combine. There are some misfits whom the combine missed with its fear pacemakers. In others, the pacemakers blow their fuses. These people without the fear pacemakers are very dangerous to the combine because if they are not checked, destroyed, discredited, isolated, or enfolded into the combine, they can show others how to blow out their own fear pacemakers, can show others how to be free humans linked to other free humans. The combine rarely has to directly destroy the misfits itself. Just direct eliminations would reveal the existence of the combine. So such direct eliminations are kept to the minimum. The real tool of the combine is a vague sense of uncomfortableness, of inferiority, and of mistrust within the victims of the combine. The setting of the novel is a mental ward in which most of the patients are self committed. They believe themselves weak, unable to cope with the outside world. They believe the fear comes from themselves, not from the pacemakers. They just have to start believing in themselves, and they could pull out the pacemakers and walk out of the hospital. But every time they reach this threshold of freedom, the combine, by clever remote manipulation, turns up the vague uncomfortableness and mistrust. The victims themselves do the destroying of the misfit either in themselves or that con-man pied piper who laughs at their fears and limits, who shows them the way to freedom. It is the victims who do most of the censoring.

One of the main functions of art is to be that misfit who reveals and fights against the combine, to show the way back to freedom and self-trust. This misfit function of art is the real target of this attack of the combine in the form of Jesse and Dana.

This sexual layer of this attack is a misleading ploy. As Lisa Duggan says in her excellent article in the October 1989 **Artforum** on the history of this attack on art, "sex panics, witch-hunts, and red scares are staples of American history....They have been enthusiastically taken up by powerful groups in an effort to impose a rigid orthodoxy on the majority." Understand, each of

continued page 20

the layers of the attack are important and must be met directly and with full force. The use of sex censorship to disguise political censorship is recent in our history, starting in the 19th century. It is based on our Puritan national background. It depends on the belief that sex is somehow innately bad, or at least suspect. So if you want to shut someone up, it is easier if you can paint the issue in sexual terms...better yet, in terms of sexual deviance. The people who should stand up and full force beat back this threat are strangely silent, strangely half-hearted. My liberal Senator Alan Cranston replied to my letter about the Mapplethorpe/N.E.A. issue by saying he (Cranston) is totally against Helms' attempts at censorship, but that the N.E.A. did make mistakes which needed to be looked into, making sure it does not do it again. With friends like this, who needs Helms!

"If I protest that my work is not obscene, I would be admitting the valid existence of sexual obscenity. There is nothing wrong with using sex, nudity, and all the bodily functions in art. It is time to do away with the legal concept of sexual obscenity once and for all...and for good. Dana and Jesse are just giving us artists an opening to accomplish this."

The Village Voice defended my work from Helms just on the grounds that I am physically disabled. I have not figured out the logic of that even now. Duggan says, if you are branded as sexually deviant, "No one will defend your action, only your right to due process and a good lawyer."

There is a martial arts principle that when you are attacked, that is the point when you have the most force potential. This is because you can combine the opposing force with your own, and reshape this new, more powerful force into your advantage. Helms has given us an opening to create a greater freedom. I refuse to defend my work from charges of obscenity. It is an indefinable concept invented to limit freedom and to promote the established moral order. If I protest that my work is not obscene, I would be admitting the valid existence of sexual obscenity. There is nothing wrong with using sex, nudity, and all the bodily functions in art. It is time to do away with the legal concept of sexual obscenity once and for all...and for good. Dana and Jesse are just giving us artists an opening to accomplish this.

But sex is just the top layer of this attack. Sex is what Communism was in the McCarthy era. In the 50's, people thought those who were blacklisted for being Communists or fellow travelers somehow deserved to be blacklisted, were asking to be blacklisted by going too far. People thought it was O.K. to sign the loyalty oath, O.K. to not hire the blacklisted, O.K. to play along with the corrupt system...O.K. Because they were not and never had been reds.

But what they did not understand was that the real focus was not communism, but controlling power. The same is true today. Let us peel away the layers.

I have not heard anyone talk about the visual beauty of **Piss Christ**...only about Serrano's right to do "obscene" and "blasphemous" art. In our society in which church and state are supposed to be separate, any attempt by a governmental agency to label images and subjects as "blasphemous" and "sacrilegious"...or, for that matter, "sacred" and "holy"...and act upon these labels, is intolerable. Religious material has been traditionally a rich vein of artistic inspiration, whether the art itself is religious, anti-religious, or using symbols from religion in a non-religious context. This is a basic artistic and religious freedom which must not be taken away.

Why Serrano is on the hit list is because his images are seen by some to be anti-Christ or anti-Christian. I think this religious layer of the attack on artistic freedom is as deep, if not deeper, than the usual layer. In the name names special report on "funds descending into cesspool of 'Art' filth," the right wing **N.Y.C. Tribune** listed five objectionable performance artists (Annie Sprinkle, Karen Finley, Johanna Went, Cheri Gaulke and myself). An interesting pattern appeared. All five use trance process in our art; all five can be considered to be shamanistic. By reading this article, it became clear that this layer is not a coincidence. There are many artists who use sex and nudity in their art. What set these five apart is their use of trance, of ritual, of the body, of taboo to create a magical social change. This is also true for the **Modern Primitives** exhibition. What this reveals is that "sexual obscenity" is just a cover for religious, artistic, and political battles. We are on the list not because we are sexually obscene...but because our intention is not to just sexually arouse. And that is what is threatening to the combine.

Under this religious layer, there is the political layer. As V. Vale and Andrea Juno, whose **Re/search Publications** is under the Jesse/Dana investigations, said in their open letter in **The S.F. Chronicle**(March 23,1990): "Art is not always comfortable to society. One of the major powers of art is to stimulate dialogue on psychological and other issues society neglects....Is it just a coincidence that the victims of Helm's 'investigation' are all members of oppressed communities? Mapplethorpe was gay, Serrano is Hispanic, Frank Moore is severely handicapped, Annie Sprinkle, Karen Finley, (Cheri Gaulke,) and Johanna Went are women dealing frankly with sexuality. With such groups now finding their voices in society, it must strike fear in the hearts of Helms and his ilk." It is important to see the attack as a tactic in the movement to "repress anything controversial: to get rid of the 'fringes' and purge the country of eccentricity, cultural diversity and minority identity," to again use the words of Vale and Juno.

The truth is the N.E.A. controversy is just a move in a game for political power. It is not really about defunding the N.E.A.. Even though the N.E.A. does a lot of good, it is one of the best ways that the combine powers have to control the arts. The issue of defunding the N.E.A. is a ploy to direct the attention of both artists and the general public away from what is really going on.

Dana and Jesse, and the forces behind them, have no intention of cutting or killing the N.E.A. It would not make political sense. It would be like a drug pusher threatening to cut off the junkie's supply. The pusher will not permanently cut off the drugs to the junkie...unless it is as a warning to other junkies. The drugs are the pusher's control over the junkie. The N.E.A. money is the medium of the combine's control over artists and their art.

The threat of killing the N.E.A, the cutting funds, creates a manageable flap to focus people's attention upon, to drain artists' protesting energy into, and set up a dummy issue. Then when the peak of outrageousness in this media event has passed, a "Compromise" is offered. The N.E.A. will not be done away with. There will be money for the arts. Artists will be painted as winners. Of course, there is a price for this "victory". The "compromise" will be new rules, both spelled out and hidden, willingly accepted by artists. These rules, these fears, these limits will make artists agents for the established order. This is the real goal of the combine.

This real goal and this basic dishonesty of the plot that Jesse and Dana represent becomes increasingly clearer the closer we look under the surface. In the CNN piece on his attack on Annie Sprinkle , Dana said he does not want to censor this "obscene" art....He just wants artists to do this kind of art on their own time and money, not on the government's. This would be outrageous in itself. But it is a lie. The real goal of this attack is to make all art, not just N.E.A. funded art, the agent for the order, to deball all art, to tame down all art. Annie, Vale and Juno, and some other artists on the hit list have not received a penny of N.E.A. money. The Kitchen, which does get N.E.A funding, did not use any of that money for the Sprinkle show. Dana's logic for wanting to cut the Kitchen's government funding is:

Since the N.E.A. sponsors some of the Kitchen's programs, it enables the Kitchen to produce on its own other shows, some of which may be objectionable to the N.E.A./combine. Since the N.E.A. indirectly supports these independent productions, it can express its displeasure of these independent productions by cutting the funds to the offending gallery or artist.

We have seen this line of mislogic before. What comes to mind is the forbidding of federally funded family planning centers from talking with their clients about the abortion option. After all, historically in America abortion and birth-control have been tied with obscenity.

The message is clear: eliminate controversial, experimental, and avant-garde art. This purely artistic level of the attack by those who do not care about art is revealed in the **Tribune** article. The elimination of the politically and artistically controversial work is to make the N.E.A. into a vague system of rewards and punishments based on "correctness"...be it political, religious, artistic, or sexual/moral. The example of this reward/punishment system is the threat by the N.E.A. to withdraw as $10,000 grant to **Artists' Space** for a show about AIDS because of an essay in the catalog criticizing Jesse and other public officials. The N.E.A. chair John Frohnmeyer tried to justify this by saying, "political discourse ought to be in the political arena and not in a show sponsored by the endowment." This outrageous attempt to limit the scope of art makes it clear that John is no friend of art. It is also clear that obscenity and N.E.A. defunding are smoke screens.

Let me put it bluntly. What we have here is another McCarthy era. Jesse is losing his favorite enemy, the Communists, which he has used as an excuse for trying to limit personal freedoms. Dana needs an issue to make his reputation on. And John just wants to keep his job. When the outside enemy began to crumble with the Berlin Wall, they looked inside for new enemies to sink their teeth into. First, they focused on privacy with drug testing and "just say no" ...after all, drug pushers make great bad guys. It was too limited. Same was true with abortion. But suppression of expression under the guise of a war against obscenity opens a wide range of possibilities.

Understand, I am using Helms, Rohrabacher, and Frohnmeyer as symbols; as they are using me and the other artists on the hit list as symbols. And frankly they are easy targets. They are dishonest men who do not really care about art or morality. They are not the real culprits. The real culprits are us artists, us liberals. It was us who opened the door to Helms' attack by surrendering the artist's control of

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art over to what is called "politically correct." When feminists tried to ban artists such as Karen Finley from art shows because of using objectionable words and images, when blacks, gays, and the disabled tried to change the stereotypes by trying to censor them out of existence, it gave Helms the opening that he needed. The only real way to get rid of evil, bad, stupid stereotypes and ideas is to give them freedom of expression in a open marketplace of ideas where all ideas have equal access to people. This requires the trust and the faith that the truth will be ultimately chosen.

"The real culprits are us artists, us liberals. It was us who opened the door to Helms' attack by surrendering the artist's control of art over to what is called 'politically correct'."

I am a slow typist. As I write this, events have overtaken me. The combine plot has struck again with its remote control of fear and with its drugs of bigness and money. The Cleveland Public Theater Performance Art Festival invited me to do my **Journey to Lila** ritualistic piece with audience participation. Two weekends before I was to perform, the city's vice squad sat in on the festival's show of Annie Sprinkle and made it clear that if she did certain things which are regular parts of her art, she and the director of the festival would be arrested. For personal, practical reasons, Annie decided to change her act.

We should be outraged that the vice squad came. We should be outraged against the government undercover spying on art and theater, against the use of a bad law in a manner it was not intended, against what makes it impossible for us to see truly free art and theater in this Festival. There was a lot of pressure on me from the Festival director* to not be unreasonable, to give up control of the art over to some political game.

The law was used in a very strange way. The law says performers and their audience can not touch one another on certain so-called erogenous zones. In ritualistic audience participatory performances in general and in my work in particular, this prohibition destroys any hope of doing the work. As I write this, I do not have copies of all of Cleveland's laws that are being wrongly applied to works of art. I do not know if there are laws in Cleveland against nudity in performance. But it is clear it is not possible for me to do the art without getting arrested or seriously compromising the integrity of the art. I am not willing to do this. I am willing to be arrested for the art.

I would understand if the director did not want to get arrested along with my company. After all, the curator in Cincinnati is facing a possible five year sentence for having the Mapplethorpe exhibition. Most people do not have that kind of courage. If that was the fear, I could have created with the Festival an artistic protest against the law that would have neither broken the law nor compromised.

But it was not fear of arrest, but the fear of losing funding, fear of how the festival would look, fear of inconvenience. The focus of how to protect the Festival, its size, its importance, its financial health. What was right for the art was forgotten. In fact, both the art and the artist became nuisances to be dealt with, to be sacrificed. The headset is it is the duty for artists and for every citizen to obey the law, even admittedly unjust laws. After all, it was stated by the director that he, Mulready, is not Martin Luther King. King, Jefferson, Ghandi, and all of the artists and just plain folk who broke unjust laws in order to evolve things to a better place are turning over in their graves. This is one of the main functions of art. It was stated by Mulready that it is impossible to present in Cleveland what is presented in big cities such as N.Y.C., L.A., S.F...but we have also done the same performances in small cities such as Denver, Buffalo, and Rochester.

He said it as if this situation is acceptable, if regrettable, in the Midwest. This attitude places the festival in the role of being the agent of the established order, rather than on the side of change. I was told by Mulready that this kind of art could be shown privately in Cleveland. But the Festival could not be remotely linked to it unless the art is mutilated to fit the status quo. I kept being told to think of what the festival gives me and the other artists in terms of money and exposure. I should not blow it. What is forgotten in all of this is if the art is not intact, if the content of art is not firmly in the hands of artists, then artists, art festivals, art galleries and theaters, and even art itself will become just window-dressing for the established order. I am thinking of the artists. If I gave up control of the art directly or indirectly either to the vice squad or this festival, I would be putting a frame of untruth around the artists and the audiences of the Festival. I will not do that.

After two days of pressuring me to change my performance, Mulready suddenly reversed his position. He did not do it from a flash of integrity but because he was getting pressure from both inside the Cleveland Public Theatre and the national Art Community. I did the performance as it was originally created without incident.

The combine plot has Mulready hooked on the drug of bigness, on the funding habit. In our talks on the crisis over my performance, we talked about how big the Festival was, how the funding could not be risked now that the Festival has reached this level of size and importance. Hidden within

* I need to make a distinction between the Festival and the Cleveland Public Theatre. The festival is an event that takes place at the theatre for two months, once a year. The Festival director, Tom Mulready, is not a regular member of the theater organization's staff. Any references here to the Festival and/or its director refer only to the Festival and its director and do not reflect in any way the Cleveland Public Theater or its director and staff. I found the Cleveland Public Theater director and staff to be a great example of what a group of people can do when they are committed to art.

this is the pacemaker of fear that the combine plot can use by remote control. This drug of bigness is why, to get N.E.A. money, artists are signing what amounts to a loyalty oath to the established order, agreeing to not do patently offensive work. The combine can only pull off this slow giving up of the artists' control by using the drug of bigness and the pacemaker of fear.

It is easy to get hooked on the drug of bigness, as I found out when I received a $5,000 N.E.A. fellowship in the early 80s. I had been doing art, performance and theater for about ten years with little or no money. The N.E.A. money was just extra money.

I soon noticed the work shifted from human-intensive to a more money-intensive focus. This shift was slight because I work on a small grassroots scale. But the scale began to expand. In a way, this expanding scale was fun, exciting, glamorous. But the change did not organically come from the art. Moreover, as my N.E.A. year drew to a close, I became more and more anxious about where I would get more money, thinking about applying for more grants.

All of this took away from the art. It made me much more vulnerable to compromise, much more likely to become a part of the combine. The old richness of possibilities and alternatives began to dry up, being funneled into a single possibility of grants. One day I began to wonder how I could have done art for all those years, and now I was full of fear. I decided to not play the grant game.

If this addiction can happen to an artist like me, who operates on the small scale, I can only imagine what a temptation of addiction someone like the Festival director, Mulready, has to cope with. But when the drug of bigness and fear of losing funds compromise art, it is time to protest...it is time to bring it all back down to the basic core of the artistic experience which is the art coming directly through the artist to the society without any censoring influences, so that art can cause evolution in the society. It is extremely dangerous when artists sign loyalty oaths to the established order to became paid agents, when art festivals and galleries find it acceptable for vice squads to spy on art and theater, to use blue laws to forbid art.

To fight back this full scale attack on creative expression, the attack that may surpass that of the McCarthy era, we artists must be willing to make sacrifices to become independent of the combine. Many galleries and performance companies have died when their grants were cut. This is because bigness and money-intensive art which grants promote drain possibilities from us, blind us to the possibilities that are outside the combine. It has become increasingly important for us artists to start devolving art back to the human personal scale and away from high tech mass bigness. This devolution will create alternatives that our society needs, and which is the function of art.

I usually perform at grassroots spaces which have created independent alternatives to the combine. For example, Karen Briede ran a multi-level visual and performance gallery in Denver. She brought in nationally known but controversial artists by using the money she made in her hair salon....She was always selling art to her hair clients. She is now having nationally important exhibitions in her apartment in Chicago. In Seattle, **A.F.L.N. (A Flimsy Lace Nightie)** is doing the same thing by being a coffeehouse during the day and a gallery by night. In these and other similar small places, cutting edge art finds homes because people like Karen personally take risks for the art. But as Martha Wilson of **Franklin Furnace** has shown, it is possible for established galleries to show controversial art. It is extremely important that both artists and art administrators be willing to lose everything, including funding, in order to save freedom. This is the only way we will **win back our full freedom from the combine, take back our full range of possibilities.**

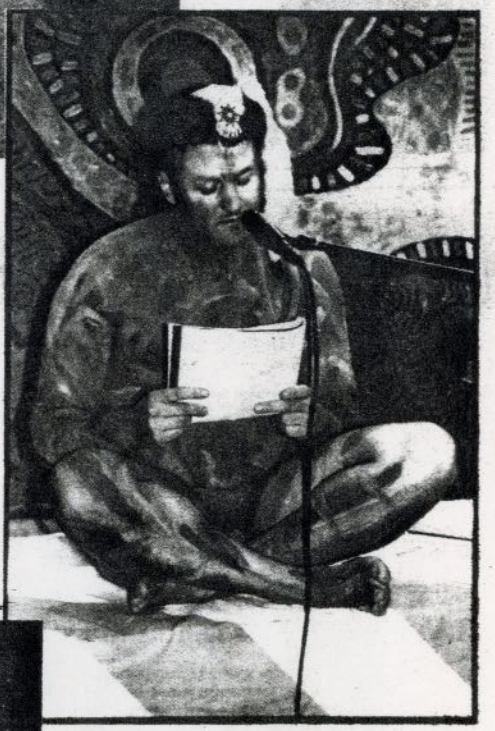
I want to close this by quoting from a letter from Kyle Griffith, an author. The combine "is counting on the majority of creative people to stay on the sidelines until the anti-art movement gains real support among the general public, saying, 'Well, my work isn't that controversial, so why should I take the trouble to support a bunch of really hard-core people who are deliberately asking for trouble from the blue noses, anyway?'" ...The combine plot "encourage[s] 'consumer art' while discouraging all art forms that turn the 'consumers' of art into artists themselves. What people like you are **really** being attacked for is drawing the audience, the 'art consumer,' into the creative process."

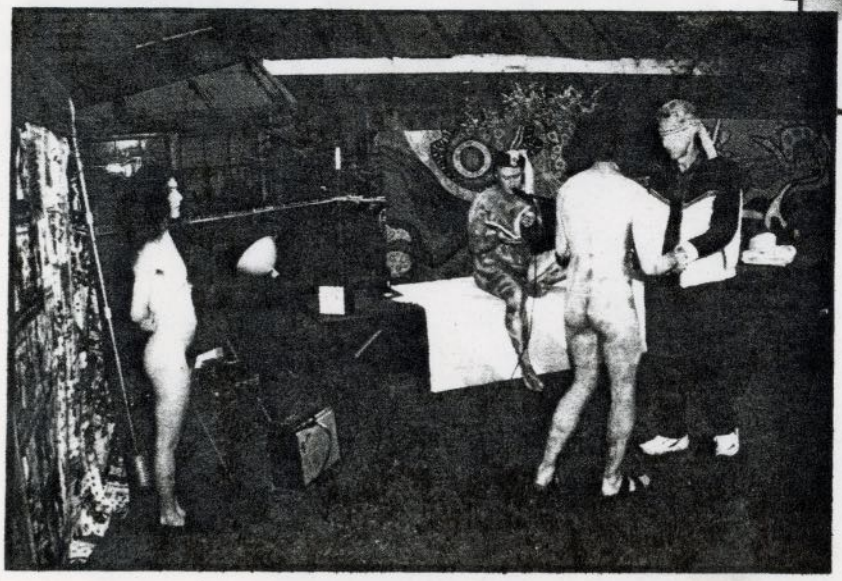
Frank Moore

Exploring The Forbidden With Frank Moore!

Out Of The Cave And Into The Light: Berkeley-based artist Frank Moore (that's him in the wheelchair) invites audience participation in his show "The Cave."

WARNING
Enter at your own risk!
This piece may be threatening to your everyday reality.
This piece may cause questioning of the common morality.
FRANK MOORE





One never knows what to expect from performance artist Frank Moore. Ever since 1978, when his "Outrageous Beauty Revue" shocked and delighted audiences at San Francisco's Fab Mab, Frank has used a variety of approaches to tear down sexual and cultural taboos he views as harmful. These days, he's especially concerned with the rising tide of censorship.

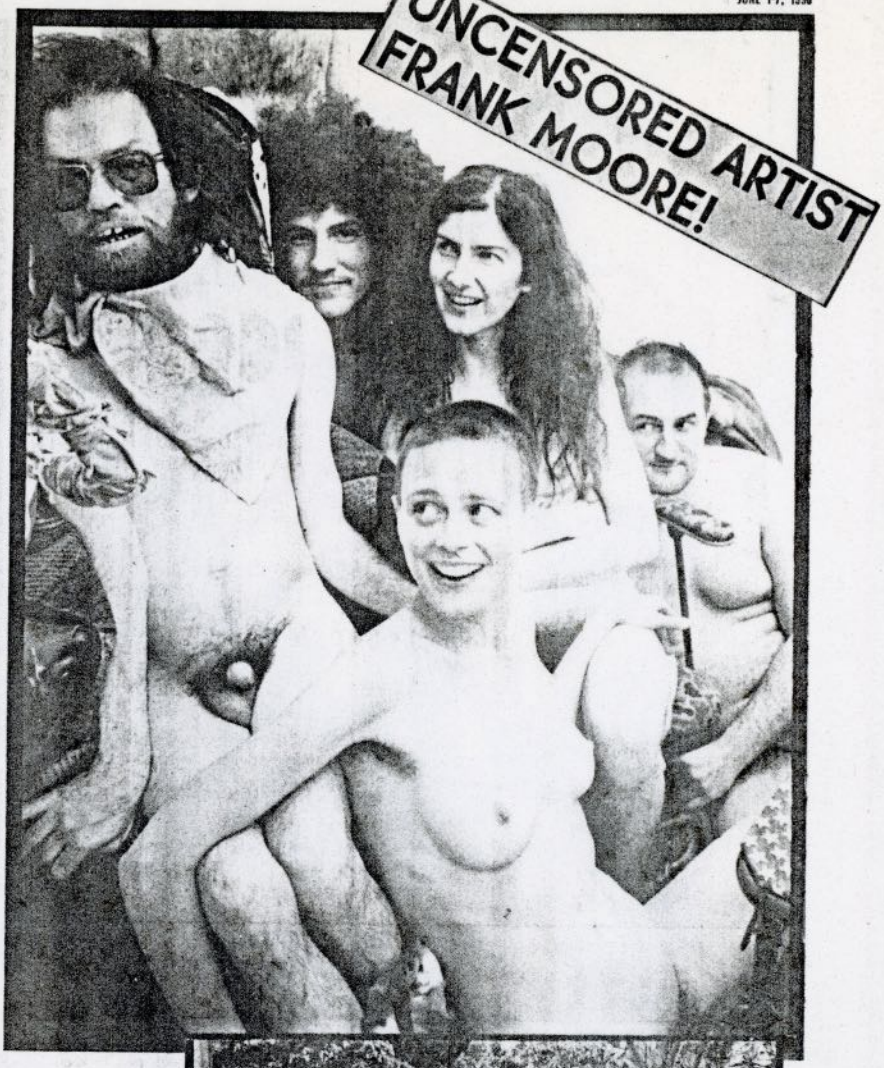
"I have not heard anyone talk about the visual beauty of 'Piss Christ,' only about Serrano's right to do 'obscene' and 'blasphemous' art," explains Moore. "In our society, where church and state are supposed to be separate, any attempt by a government agency to label images as 'blasphemous' and 'sacrilegious,' or for that matter, 'sacred' and 'holy' is intolerable."

The recipient of a $5,000 N.E.A. Fellowship during the early 1980's, Frank gave up on what he calls "The Grant Game" years ago, because he felt the process of trying to get another grant was a waste of energy he could have put to better use creating art.

Perhaps the idea of "staying lean/staying hungry" gives Moore's work a special spark more commercial artists aren't able to tap into.

—**Dave Patrick**

Frank Moore On Censorship!



Earlier this year, Berkeley-based performance artist Frank Moore was named by Senator Jesse Helms and Representative Dana Rohrabacher as one of one of the targets for their war on art. "All of my heroes have been banned, jailed and harassed for their work," claims Moore, quite seriously. "For a while, I was feeling left out. My ego was crushed when Rohrabacher went on television and labeled Annie Sprinkle a threat to the established moral order. After all, my work is as threatening as hers!"

Fortunately — or unfortunately — depending upon how you look at it, Moore was included in a censorship hit list published February 5 in the *New York City Tribune*, along with Ms. Sprinkle, Karen Finley, Johanna Went and Cheri Gaulke. As you can see by the photos we've published from Frank's two most recent appearances in the Bay Area, he has no intention of toning down his shamanistic style.

"The use of sexual censorship to disguise political censorship is a part of our history, which comes from our puritan national background," explains Frank. "It's based on the mistaken belief that sex is somehow innately bad, or at least suspect. So if you want to shut someone up, it's easier if you can paint the issue in sexual terms, or better yet, sexual deviance.

"I refuse to defend my work from charges of obscenity. There is no such thing as sexual obscenity. It is an undefinable concept invented to limit freedom. There is nothing wrong with using sex, nudity and all the bodily functions in art. It is time to do away with the legal concept of sexual obscenity once and for all.

"Is it just a coincidence that the victims of Helms' investigation are all members of oppressed communities? Mapplethorpe was gay, Serrano is Hispanic, I am severely handicapped while Annie, Karen, Johanna and Cheri are all women dealing frankly with sexuality. With such groups finding their voices, it must strike fear in the hearts of Helms and his ilk.

"The real culprits in the censorship controversy are not Jesse Helms or the Bible-thumping religious right. The real culprits are the artists and liberals who opened the door by surrending the artist's control over what is 'politically correct.' Unfair stereotypes cannot be censored out of existence. The only way to get rid of evil, stupid stereotypes and ideas is to give them freedom of expression in an open marketplace where all ideas have equal access to people. This requires the trust and faith that the truth will ultimately be chosen."

Thanks, Frank, we couldn't have said it better ourselves.

Photography By Kevin Rice & Mark Ziemann

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THOMAS BIRMINGHAM, "Ebeneezer Frohynmayer." Copyright 1990, all rights reserved.

PERILOUS PERFORMANCES: FINLEY, MOORE, SPRINKLE

A CLOSER LOOK AT CHIAROSCURO GALLERY

PROPER EXPOSURE: PHOTOGRAPHING 3-D ARTWORK

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF CHICAGO ART

MARKETING YOUR ART TO GALLERIES

PERILOUS PERFORMANCES: FINLEY, MOORE, SPRINKLE

October was a good month for performance art in Chicago; Frank Moore, Karen Finley and Annie Sprinkle were all here in front of truth-starved audiences. I say "truth-starved" because we had read a lot about Moore, Finley, and Sprinkle, and yet we actually knew so little. We needed to see their work for ourselves.

KAREN FINLEY

Finley's stint at Beacon Street Gallery, where she performed "We Keep Our Victims Ready," was greeted with a flurry of publicity. The daily papers did features on her, Chicago magazine reviewed the show, audiences showed up in droves; she was the talk of the town.

The unfortunate aspect of all the hoopla was that it flooded potential audiences with information about Finley which should have been secondary to her art. Finley was "mainstreamed" by the kind of star treatment that has historically diffused art and turned it into an entertainment commodity. Turgid newspaper descriptions and reviews destroyed the punch and surprise of her work. By the time we'd all settled into our theater seats, we'd already read about the chocolate-smearing bit in Newsweek, right?

Thanks to Newsweek, even the general public knows that Finley and three other performance artists caused NEA Chairperson John Frohnmayer to reveal his true colors (red, white and blue) this summer. But what isn't generally understood is that Frohnmayer, by revoking Finley's grant, helped give the mass media a convenient, catch-all phrase to deflect her, define her and trivialize her work. The headline in the Sun-Times read "Feminist fights censors." Doesn't that just say it all?

I don't want to contribute to that process; I want to say something about Finley in a different way, by telling a story about myself. Bear with this non-traditional approach.

I used to live in New York. Despite the stress of having no money, I enjoyed life there. I didn't mind living in poverty-stricken neighborhoods filled with desperate characters, because I developed the central coping mechanism of the New Yorker: I didn't notice anything unpleasant.

My offensiveness-detecting radar was fine-tuned and it turned itself on the minute I walked outside. I glanced away when I even sensed the form of a human shape sleeping on a grate. I hummed or talked to myself when I heard a deranged voice screaming obscenities. The slightest whiff of something that smelled more unpleasant than usual always provoked a swift response: I quickly changed subway cars or crossed the street. It's not that I wasn't compassionate, it's just that I developed the skill of dropping coins into the hands of panhandlers without looking at them, much less actually touching the degraded flesh. I cared, but I couldn't deal with the horrorshow on a visceral level.

Then Kevin moved in with me. He had a very bad radar system. He saw, heard, and smelled everything, and then he committed the unpardonable offense of telling me all about it. He'd say things like, "God, Liz, I saw the worst thing today, I was walking on 10th Street and I saw this guy jerking off in a doorway, and he kept saying 'dirt, yeah, dirt' and then I looked at him and thought, 'he has lipstick all over his face,' and then I realized it was blood and he had two black eyes..." and I'd scream, "Kevin, why did you look? Why didn't you just keep going?"

I tell this story because I believe most people are like me. They don't want to see, think about, or deal with ugliness on any level. However, Karen Finley's conviction seems to be that we can't ignore ugliness any longer, because it has become a part of the very air we breathe. It's inside of us, and on a larger level, it's destroying our culture.

The first thing we have to do is acknowledge the horror of the AIDS crisis, homelessness, alcoholism, the oppression of disenfranchised people, and the hatred of women. Finley, very courageously, allows herself to be the battered agent that lifts our impaired collective consciousness.

But we must not allow the politicians and the media to trick us into thinking of her simply as a "chocolate-smeared woman." Finley herself has fallen into the trap of promoting herself with press shots showing her in mid-performance, with outstretched arms, her head thrown back, her body covered in chocolate, candies, alfalfa sprouts and red tinsel. So everybody has written about how she looks.

Nobody has written about how she smells. She smells god-awful. Her sweat and the cheap chocolate icing don't combine to produce a pleasant aroma. Add to that the synthetic smell of candy and the flat odor of sprouts going rotten, and put it all under hot stage lights, and it fills up an auditorium. It makes you want to run.

That's the beauty, though, of the performance medium. Polite social convention dictates that we have to sit through something we would turn away from if it were depicted in a painting, a sculpture, or god forbid, played out in real life.

Karen Finley has chosen her medium well; just as Frohymayer, Helms and Rohrabacher have well chosen to mount their attack on free expression by picking on performance artists first.

FRANK MOORE

Another artist on the Helms/Rohrabacher hit-list is Frank Moore. It's unlikely that Helms or Rohrabacher know much about him. They probably don't know, for instance, that he has cerebral palsy and is 99 percent physically disabled. They surely don't have any inkling of what he actually does on stage. All they know is that Moore gets naked during his performances, and that his audiences, heaven forbid, sometimes get naked too. According to Moore, "My art is rooted in breaking out of isolation. Until I was 17, I did not have any way to communicate except through my immediate family members...I always wanted to break physical, emotional and spiritual isolation--first for myself, then for others. In my work, I have always used nudity and physical acts which most people would call sexual. It is just one of my ways of breaking normal reality into new ways of communicating and relating..."

Moore holds four degrees. He has taught at UCLA, the San Francisco Art Institute, Stanford and elsewhere. He has performed in films and videos; his performance resume fills several pages. His writings have been published extensively.

During October, Moore and three of his company members, including his longtime companion, Linda Mac, were brought to Chicago by Karen Briede. Briede booked Moore's "Outrageous Horror Show" into Club Lower Links along with Annie Sprinkle's "Sex Education Class" as part of a series dubbed "Year of Peril." The "Outrageous Horror Show" was a much more abbreviated piece than Moore's "Journey to Lila," which goes on for hours and involves intense audience participation. "The Horror Show" began with Moore's "singing" along to corny pop standards, and then evolved into a nude, trance-like segment in which Moore and company took off their clothes and writhed together on stage, while another nude company member wrapped the audience with toilet paper, foil and plastic wrap. From there, the performance bolted into a nightmare enactment of a man-eating savage feeding on the flesh of a performer planted in the audience. It was a no-holds-barred, nonlinear performance; it was profound, disturbing, and strangely sweet.

Moore has been doing performances like this for years; it has only been recently that the Right Wing has caught on. And now, he is using his increased publicity in a good way. He is getting more bookings, and fighting back by suggesting that artists use the current censorship crisis to find new ways of working outside the system.

John Frohnmayer won't get the pleasure of revoking a grant given to Moore, because Moore doesn't apply for NEA grants. In the Fall 1990 issue of P Form, as part of a long essay, Moore wrote, "It's easy to get hooked on the drug of bigness, as I found out when I received a $5,000 NEA fellowship in the early 80s. I had been doing art, performance and theater for about ten years with little or no money. The NEA money was just extra. I soon noticed the work shifted from human-intensive to a more money-intensive focus. The shift was slight because I had to work on a small grassroots scale. But the scale began to expand. In a way, this expanding scale was fun, exciting, glamorous. But the change did not organically come from the art. Moreover, as my NEA year drew to a close, I became more and more anxious about where I would get more money, thinking about applying for more grants.

"All of this took away from the art. It made me much more vulnerable to compromise...The old richness of possibilities began to dry up, being funneled into a single possibility of grants...I decided not to play the grant game.

"...When the drug of bigness and fear of losing funds compromise art, it is time to protest. It is extremely dangerous when artists sign loyalty oaths to the established order to become paid agents...

"...To fight back this full scale attack on creative expression... we must be willing to make sacrifices to become independent of the combine. Many galleries and performance companies have died when their grants were cut. This is because bigness and money-intensive art...drain possibilities from us, blind us to the possibilities that are outside the combine. It has become increasingly important for us to start devolving art back to the human personal scale and away from high tech mass bigness. This devolution will create alternatives that our society needs, and which is a function of art."

ANNIE SPRINKLE

After all the hard thought provoked by Finley and Moore, it was a relief to see Annie Sprinkle's "Sex Education Class" at Lower Links. Although Sprinkle's work is thought-provoking, it is essentially nonpolitical and nonintellectual. "I'm not into politics, I'm into pleasure," she says.

Sprinkle has steadfastly refused to let herself be drawn into the current censorship crisis. However, her work attracted the attention of Helms, Rohrabacher, and that wonderful family newspaper, the National Enquirer, when The Kitchen, an NEA-funded performance space, presented Sprinkle's one-woman show, "Post Porn Modernist." Enquiring minds were told, "Porno Star Puts On Disgusting X-rated Live Shows - & Your Taxes Pay for It!" Rohrabacher railed, "Tax money is being flushed into a sewer of fetishism, depravity and pornography."

The truth of the matter is that Annie Sprinkle is an art school graduate who has devoted her life and her art to exploring her own sexuality and alternatives to society's accepted sexual norms. As an actress, model, photographer, writer, publisher, designer, and director, she has worked in the pornography industry and sexual underground for years. Lately, her work has been primarily in performance art in New York and Europe. Her depth of sexual experience gives her work a piercing honesty.

The show Sprinkle brought to Chicago, "Sex Education Class," was a light exercise in consciousness-raising. Sprinkle, dressed as a sexy nurse, sweetly led the audience through the topics of "Society's idea of how a woman's sex life should be," "Society's proper and improper sex roles for a woman," and "Gender identity and sexual preferences." The show featured a slide show of before and after pictures of women who, Sprinkle explained, wanted to explore the "slut-whore" side of their sexual selves. The "before" pictures showed serious, unadorned women in street clothes. The "after" pictures showed the same women in elaborate porn poses.

The show also featured a special guest--Sprinkle's friend Les Nichols, a surgically-made hermaphrodite female-to-male transsexual. Nichols proudly showed off his new and old sexual organs to a surprised audience.

I talked to Annie Sprinkle by phone the night after the show.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED DOING PERFORMANCE ART?

I lived with Willem De Ridder in Italy when I was 24, 25, 26. He was a member of Fluxus. He's a very well respected Dutch artist. He taught me a lot about performance art, and we did performances together in Europe...And then I went to the School of Visual Arts in New York. And I started doing performances here and there. Although I always considered my sex life as a kind of performance art, because my sex life was like personal, private performance art. I had such a wild, crazy, experimental, playful, creative sex life. But anyway, I did some public performances. And then it evolved ... I started doing performances in a friend's burlesque theater. Before it was opened, she let some experimental artists come in and do some things there. That's where we put together my one-woman show, which was then booked at the Kitchen. A year ago in January, I did it at the Kitchen. Since then I've done it in Amsterdam and Germany.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE "POST PORN MODERNIST?"

It's a performance piece about my own personal sexual evolution, and that's basically it, in a nutshell. I think it's fairly deep. It's funny, though.

I THOUGHT YOUR SHOW AT LOWER LINKS WAS FUNNY AND DEEP AS WELL.

Well, thanks. "Post Porn Modernist" is much deeper. It has a lot of different levels. A lot is going on.

IS PERFORMING WITH LES NICHOLS SOMETHING NEW? I SAW YOU TOGETHER ON CHANNEL J IN NEW YORK, ON THE ROBIN BIRD SHOW.

That was the first time we did a performance together. And then we did it once more at a lesbian theater [event].

LAST NIGHT, YOU SAID, "LES ISN'T POLITICALLY CORRECT." WHEN YOU SAID THAT, I REALIZED I WAS SITTING THERE STRUGGLING AND HAVING TROUBLE WITH WHY ANYBODY WOULDN'T WANT TO BE A WOMAN.

You know, I'm not considered very politically correct. I'm not into being politically correct, I'm into individuality. People being who they are and what they want to be. Les sees the world really differently. He really thinks that men have everything; they've got it made. That's the way he sees the world. And what gets me, everybody is trying to make each other just like them.

I GOT A LOT OUT OF THE PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF ERASING JUDGMENTS.

Yeah, that's the key. That's what I think my work is all about--trying to get people to look at their judgments.

THAT'S HARD FOR SOME PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY REGARDING SEXUALITY.

It's hard because a lot of people are judgmental toward themselves. For example, a lot of women have a kind of masochistic side, and that's politically incorrect. But it's the number two sexual fantasy. But rather than denying [the fantasy] because it's politically incorrect, if everyone looked at it and explored it in a safe way, it'd be over. You know, my fantasy of it lasted about a month or two. I worked on it 20 years ago, and then it was gone. But that's where we're at. But rather than judging it, and calling it politically incorrect, let's look at it. Let's look at Les Nichols, even if he isn't politically correct. Let's look at prostitutes, even though they're not politically correct. Let's look at reality.

WHY DO YOU THINK AMERICANS ARE SO FEARFUL OF SEXUALITY?

We're from Puritanical roots. I think Americans are much more immature in their sexual evolution than Europeans. But there is something wonderful to that as well. Americans are more playful, they get more excited, they're more interested in it.

IT WAS INTERESTING TO HEAR SOME OF THE COMMENTS GOING ON IN THE AUDIENCE DURING YOUR PERFORMANCE. ONE WOMAN TURNED TO A MAN AND SAID, "I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!" SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT LES. BUT THERE WAS A LOT OF THAT KIND OF REACTION... INTERESTED, INTRIGUED, BUT COMPLETELY SURPRISED.

See, to Les and me, that's normal, everyday life. I think what I do in my performances...I get out there and I'm myself. I have no guilt or shame about my sexuality, and Les has no guilt or shame to his sexuality and who he is. We are who we are. Which is, apparently, very different from a lot of people. Because there is so much guilt and fear out there about their bodies. You know, people are horrified, not because of Les, but because they picture themselves doing something like that, getting onstage and showing themselves. That's what horrifies them. It's like the woman who asked the question, "Les, how do you feel about being a part of this performance?" You could tell by her voice that she couldn't believe that Les wanted to be doing it. She probably thought he was being exploited. But what she was really saying, was that for her, that's how she would feel. She couldn't even imagine getting up there and showing her clitoris, whatever. And she couldn't believe anyone else would want to. Les loved it.

SOME MEN ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT WERE SILLY QUESTIONS.

I try to have compassion. I really try to have compassion. I get a little impatient, too, sometimes, when the porn fans come around, and all they're there for is to see my tits, and here I'm trying to do something different, something to think about. But I have to have compassion, because I believe that everyone does the best that they can. And why should I want them to be like me? Why should everybody be at the same level of maturity? Maturity, that's a judgment right there.

FRANK MOOORE WANTS TO TALK TO HELMS MAN TO MAN. IF YOU COULD TALK TO PEOPLE LIKE HELMS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

I have no objection to them. I have no problem with them at all. I really love them. I think they're all perfect. I'm for everybody having the freedom to think what they want, to be different from me. They have a problem with me. I don't think they want to meet with me. If they wanted to meet with me, I'd be delighted. I'm always interested in meeting different kinds of people. But I'm not going to put myself in a situation where I let them abuse me. It's like doing a radio show about prostitution, they call up and call you a slime. I try not to put myself in those kinds of painful situations. So I have no problem with them. I don't insult them, I think it's great and it's fine, but what would I want to say to them? I'm not going to let them get abusive, which is what they like to do. I won't play that game. They've never seen what I do. What I do is always taken out of context. Last night, for instance. If anyone were to write about it for the National Enquirer, the article would say, "It's too disgusting to describe, genital displays, perverts in the audience," and blah, blah blah. So that's the way people see it, and I think you can see it was really very playful and friendly and innocent. Everyone wanted to be there, and they enjoyed it. But to hear about it out of context, it's shocking.

continued on next page ...

Annie Sprinkle

PERILOUS PERFORMANCES...

continued from previous page ...

Even in New City, they said how Annie Sprinkle masturbates, she plays with sex toys, and she shows her cervix. But you know, what the piece is actually about is my own sexual evolution. That's taken totally out of context. It's simply prejudiced.

IT'S SO INTERESTING, THE DIFFERENT ROLES YOU AND KAREN FINLEY PLAY, THE DIFFERENT WOMEN YOU BRING TO AUDIENCES.

I'm really grateful that she's there pointing out the horrors, and the abuse, and the injustices and all that. But I'd rather point out how wonderful it can be, and how healing sex can be, and all the pleasure that I've had. I like to look at the pleasure and the ecstasy, and so that makes a balance.

I'm always delighted to be mentioned in the same sentence with Karen. I admire her. Actually, in my performance, there is a scene about sexual abuse. I have a board and there are ten dildos on it, and there's a tape playing, saying "suck it bitch," and all these abusive remarks. And I'm sucking on these dildos and gagging and spitting and crying and vomiting, its very visceral, its getting in touch with the pain of how sex is in our society.

So there's a perfect example of things being taken out of context. That's a scene about sexual abuse, and it's reported as "she sucks on dildos." In fact, in that New City piece, they said "she plays with sex toys." It's a piece about sexual abuse! That's what is so neurotic about it. It's not sexual, it's using a prop to show pain and sadness.

HOW DO YOU FEEL THE ART PRESS HAS TREATED YOU?

I think it's been great, they've made me feel very welcome and very accepted. I never went out to go into art. They came to me. I like being in the art world, because you can be experimental, you can try out new ideas. I was much too experimental in porn. But I don't have police in my burlesque shows, I have police in my art shows. But then again, it makes perfect sense, in a patriarchal society. If you're in the male pleasure ghetto, they can control you, you're playing their game and being their fantasy. When you break out, you be your own fantasy, or you can be who you really are, then they're threatened.

On the other hand, I feel like we have more freedom than ever, and women are certainly getting more power than ever. There's just a backlash. The censorship is just because we do have so much freedom. Like here in New York, they had Channel J, and it was public access TV, anyone could have a television show. And what ended up happening after all these years of cable TV, it all started being sex shows. Some of the stations just ended up running prostitution ads over and over. Well, they finally ended Channel J. But it's interesting, I think they ended Channel J because it had become an embarrassment to the city, that there were all these sex shows. But it just shows what people want. That's what pepole want to express and what people want to watch. Then there were a few people who were freaking out about that, so they put an end to it. It's over now, that channel. They'll find another way to get back on, I'm sure.

But I'm not against those kinds of changes. It's all part of the tug-of-war, part of the excitement, part of the fun. I think a lot of artists are really getting off on this Jesse Helms business. Oh, they just love it. They adore it. They're having a good old time. But you know, I've been in sex for 18 years, expressing myself through sexually explicit films, video, writing, photos etc. And I'm used to it. I remember when it was the Nixon Commission, then it was the Meese Commission, every other year it's been something. Then it was the Andrea Dworkin thing. To me, it's no big deal, its totally normal. There's always somethng like that. It's just that the artists haven't been hit with it.

The thing about sensationalism, it can be intimidating. I do a few performances at the Kitchen, and then I read that I'm against the church, and sleazy, and all those thngs, and it can intimidate me, make me think, why am I doing this? But it isn't the truth. It isn't the truth.

ELIZABETH SHEPHERD

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF CHICAGO ART

The complete history of Chicago art has yet to be written, but on October 10th, at the Cultural Center, some of the pieces of the puzzle were put back into place.

A slide lecture, "Early Chicago Art: 1800s to World War II," presented by the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Chicago Artists' Coalition's Chicago Museum Committee, featured Dr. Wendy Greenhouse, Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Chicago Historical Society, and Barton Faist, artist/collector/dealer. Dr. Wendy Greenhouse spoke first, discussing European-influenced art from the 1800s to early 1900s.

In the early 1800s, Chicago was a raw, provincial frontier town. Many artists did not stay in the city, but instead, passed through as part of various expeditions. As the population grew, "the art became more academic and blended more closely with the kind of art seen in art centers of Philadelphia and New York."

Many painters of the era studied the European style or were landscape artists. For these artists, the prairie was "a very difficult subject; it did not present a lot of features and was not immediately beautiful." Other artists did portray the land and the indigenous people of the region. Charles Bird King, for instance, painted portraits of Native Americans. But many others avoided anything Midwestern. George Flower rebuilt his English home in an attempt to transport British sensibilities to the prairie.

Only during the Civil War did a resident art community emerge in Chicago. This was due to a population explosion (from 4,000 to 300,000 in forty years), as well as the increasing desirability of Chicago as a center for business, trade and transportation.

George Peter Alexander Healy (1813-1894), an internationally known portraitist who had painted European heads of state, came to Chicago in 1855. His arrival helped mold the perception that Chicago was an appropriate place for an artistic life.

Painting, sculpture and all the arts began to proliferate along with exhibitions, dealers, and collectors. Artists like Christian Schwerdt, Daniel Folger Bigelow, Junius Sloan, and Leonard Volk stayed in the city for longer periods of time.

One of the most influential organizations of the time was the Chicago Academy of Design. In 1878-9, it became the Art Institute of Chicago. Other venues for artists included shows such as the Interstate Industrial Exposition and the Columbian Exposition, the latter being housed in Beaux Arts-style architecture.

Worth Palmer, an influential collector, brought many works and influences to Chicago. Mrs. Palmer bought works by Monet and other Impressionists.

Barton Faist's expertise covers Chicago art from the 1920s to World War II. Faist's "window to the past" was opened when he moved into his studio on Ohio Street; there, he met many of the artists who had worked during the period between the wars.

In the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, the art world was smaller. Artists such as Francis Chapin, Frances Badger and Ethel Spears had a more communal relationship. They had a tradition of sending each other hand-made Christmas cards.

Even though the community was tight-knit, there were many artists. Jean Crawford Adams, winner of the Artists of Chicago Award, did impressionistic paintings. Floris Schofield had a studio on Fearson Street. She did woodcuts, paintings, and linoblock prints.

One of Chicago's most beloved artists, Ivan Albright, had his first one-man show in 1930.

Ethel Spears worked on WPA murals. Her work was often seen at Chicago Society of Artists shows in the 1930s.

Another important figure of the time was the art critic C.J. Pulliet, who wrote during the '30s for the Chicago No-Jury Society of Artists.

Frances Badger, born in Kennilworth, had a style "very much like Grant Wood, very simplified." She also did watercolors and portraits.

Another portrait artist, Archibald Motley, Jr., has provided contemporary viewers with invaluable documentation of the recent past of Chicago's African-American community.

Another artist, Rowena Fry, painted Chicago street scenes in the '30s and '40s. Her work gives the viewer an interesting perspective about what Chicago looked like during that time. (See photograph on page 11.)

Laura Van Pappelendam's work leaned to an impressionistic style. In the 1920s, she fell under the spell of Diego Rivera. She traveled extensively but always returned to Chicago. Her works appeared in a number of exhibitions during the 1930s.

Charles W. Dahlgreen's works appeared in many shows, including the International Watercolor Exhibition of 1935.

Not only did these artists create fine works of art; they also commented on and reacted to the constant change in Chicago. They documented our history. We should get to know them much better.

ROBERT SAIGH

MORE ABOUT THE CHICAGO MUSEUM COMMITTEE...

The Chicago Museum Committee is busy promoting the idea of a museum that will showcase Chicago art from its past to its ever-changing movement into the future.

Today, there is no museum whose principle purpose is to present art from the Chicago area. Such a museum would be a focal point for the promotion, display, and research of the tremendous achievements of Chicago artists.

Join the Chicago Museum Committee, and you will have a voice in this innovative, important project. Call 670-2060.

READER

December 20, 1990

The Plucky & Spunky Show
By Anthony Adler

THE PLUCKY & SPUNKY SHOW

Remains Theatre

I might have liked The Plucky & Spunky Show a lot better if I hadn't seen Frank Moore first. Frank Moore has cerebral palsy. He rides around in a wheelchair, his head and hands move spasmodically, and when he tries to talk the words come out as a series of incomprehensible whines and screeches.

So naturally he's a performance artist.

I saw Moore's show when he came to Club Lower Links in October. The evening was long, strange, and very trippy--picture a student pageant at the Jimi Hendrix Memorial School for the Disabled, circa 1971. I found myself squirming almost as soon as I walked in. There was Moore, facing us from his wheelchair, howling and gesticulating to music--his torso straining up against his seat belt; his hands wild; his tongue lolling out of his mouth; and Sonny & Cher on the box, singing what else but "Laugh at Me."

Drinks were being served. The audience applauded after every appalling number. I was thoroughly upset: my sense of dignity was being assailed. Not my sense of my own dignity, but of Moore's--my sense of the dignity of the handicapped. What amusement, what pleasure was there in seeing this unlucky man demonstrate his incapacity for us?

Then, whoosh, I saw how completely I'd missed the point. Or rather, how completely I'd fallen into it without seeing it. Moore wasn't playing to anybody's prejudices. Just the opposite: he was attacking them. Attacking them with his whole writhing, caterwauling being. His simple presence constituted a challenge to conventional notions of what a performer may and may not look like. And by extension, what roles disabled people may and may not assume. He was all wrong, and yet there he was: sitting center stage, rocking out--even turning sex symbol when his wife appeared, half-naked, to croon "I Got You Babe" with him.

I realized then that my solicitude was actually condescension: a healthy man's attempt to put a handicapped man not only in his place but in his persona. I wasn't really angry at the audience for demeaning Moore--the fact was that I was angry at Moore for playing against his assigned type.

The Plucky & Spunky Show offers similar insight--but in the form of a punch line rather than a revelation. Where Moore got in my face with his difference and defiance, Plucky & Spunky came at me with a big hug, a patient look, and an easy laugh. A comedy revue about the peculiar difficulties of the handicapped--written by wheelchair veterans Susan Nussbaum and Mike Ervin, and performed by a mixed ensemble of blind, deaf, paraplegic, and even tall actors--Plucky & Spunky pretends to a certain amount of wiseass irony; we're supposed to take the title with a heavy dose of attitude. And yet the show's overall tone actually expresses the pure essence of pluck and spunk. Nussbaum and Ervin are out to cajole us into enlightenment. They tend to teach by ingratiation.

Not that there aren't darker modulations here and there. Nussbaum gives herself some rich, surprisingly sharp passages--as in the skit where a spilled order of shrimp in black bean sauce momentarily knocks the spirit out of a paraplegic woman. Or the one where Nussbaum and David Pasquesi play wheelchair-bound lovers debating their chances of maintaining a long-term relationship in a world of hostile architecture and patronizing strangers.

Then, too, there are some plain funny bits--plain funny loosely defined here as anything with Pasquesi in it. A Second City mainstage regular, Pasquesi brings a stunningly specific comic imagination to everything he does. As just a small for instance, there's a scene where Pasquesi comes between a man and his irate, deaf wife: the wife signs the word "sorry" on Pasquesi's chest and Pasquesi goes giggly from the feel of it. The tickle's a minor detail, but it has an unexpectedly major effect, simultaneously grounding the scene in physical reality while making it fly as comedy.

Mostly, however, Plucky & Spunky goes for the warm and runny. The warm and runny and pat. An ongoing story about former poster girl Spunky and her search for identity ends with the requisite I'm-Just-Me song. Even the shrimp-and-bean-sauce tragedy closes on an up note. The revue format itself tends to defuse any dangerous interplay between show and audience, its familiarity breeding a complacency that's never challenged. People with all their limbs and all their faculties can see The Plucky & Spunky Show and sympathize with its agenda without ever examining that agenda on a personal level. Wild Frank Moore would never permit that.

From: http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-plucky--spunky-show/Content?oid=876866

THE MADISON INSURGENT

October 8 – 21, 1990

Performers celebrate life through erotic play

by Drake Scott

Frank Moore — one of eight artists targeted by Sen. Jesse Helms this year — and his performance group, CHERO, are coming to Madison Oct. 12 to perform *Journey to Lila*, a work exploring a nonsexual physicality called *eroplay*.

Moore, who calls himself a shaman, has described the group's eroplay as "intense physical playing and touching of oneself and each other," and "the happy, playful attitude towards life that comes from such play."

But despite this happy, playful attitude, Moore's work has been wrapped in controversy by forces that have sought to portray eroplay as something sinister. In 1985 Moore received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for his work. This year, he was targeted by Sen. Jesse Helms.

On Jan. 29, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that it had obtained copies of letters Helms sent to NEA Chairman John Frohnmayer. The letters demanded details on Endowment grants going back to 1982. In addition, the General Accounting Office, which is Congress's investigative arm, sent letters to the Franklin Furnace, a New York City gallery and performance space, formally requesting information on appearances by Moore, Karen Finley, Johanna Went and Cheri Gaulke. The GAO said the inquiry resulted from a demand by Helms.

Moore and other artists do not regard these inquiries as innocent fact-finding missions. In an *Open Letter to Jesse Helms* Moore asked, "Why are you going behind our backs? Why aren't you talking directly to us artists, instead of having the GAO, at the taxpayers' expense, going to the galleries and the theaters we have performed in to ask veiled questions about us? This is not an investigation for information. It is an investigation for extortion. It is part of the campaign to smear us artists as untouchable, unfundable, unbookable."

The *New York City Tribune*, a little-read conservative newspaper, included Moore in a four-part series on "obscene" art. The *Tribune* quoted a piece from *The Drama Review* about his "unpolished show that flaunted nudity, eroticism and gore in a silly childlike playfulness." But the paper failed to mention a crucial fact about Moore — he's quadriplegic, 99 percent physically disabled, spastic and unable to speak.

The Helms-led campaign against Moore and the other artists of the "untouchable eight" was successful in at least one sense: Several of the artists lost their NEA funding. In announcing the decision, Frohnmayer seemed to extend a share of the credit to Helms when he alluded to "a certain political reality" — a "catchy phrase" in Moore's estimation. Galleries that have booked the eight performers have also been subject to hassling from other funding bodies and local authorities, Moore says.

But the campaign has also given the artists an opportunity to reaffirm their messages. Last year, along with 16 others, Moore signed a *Post-Porn Modernist Manifesto*. The signers declared that they all "celebrate sex as the nourishing, life-giving force," and they proclaimed that "we use sexually explicit words, pictures and performances to communicate our ideas and emotions."

Madisonians will soon be able to judge for themselves whether that message is obscene.

"Providing adult playgrounds is one of the basic goals of my work," Moore has said. "I think playing is a safe, mind-altering drug. Our fragmented world needs taboo-breaking dreams to get back to freedom. It can go deeper into high-tech impersonal isolation, or it can rediscover the magic that happens when physical and emotional humans actively and directly link up with one another. By playing, we die and are reborn." ▼

Drake Scott co-publishes Smile *magazine, P.O. Box 3502, Madison, WI 53704. Performance is 9 p.m. Oct 12 at Nottingham Co-op, 146 Langdon St.*

FRIDAY 12

A FIVE-HOUR JOURNEY THROUGH INNER SPACE and inner time to Lila, the island of play and illusion in the sea of how-things-should-be, is a performance by Frank Moore and his troupe, Chero (see review, page 5). Frank Moore is currently being investigated by Congress at the request of Sen. Jesse Helms. 9 pm, Nottingham Co-op, 146 Langdon.

OUTRAGEOUS HORROR SHOW

Frank Moore & More

Takes place in the desert.
"Now the nightmare begins."

I AM NOT HERE.
NEITHER AM I ELSEWHERE.
KRSNA

In that victims well au *Silence of the Lambs*, I felt the warmth. *Charlie's Angels: the Movie* had finally come! 'Boz', now chairman of Behavioral Sciences at the F.B.I. Academy, and one gets the definite sense that he has lost his idealism and become complacent with his position. When faced with those really tough

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Reviews

Frank Moore. Illustration by Michael Labash.

questions, Pepper she still runs to Charlie for advice, whose finally caught up to his crimes and spends his time safely locked away. What's Charlie really guilty of? Doing time, you see, he's reel to real life *Death Valley '69*. Every girl deserves a daddy like Charlie. Getting back to the desert, I mean movie, Charlie I mean Norman is being played by *Arnold Schwarzkopfenegger*, I mean nigger, eventually escapes and becomes a member of **Frank Moore**'s performance art unit where he's working on more social expressions of his cannibalistic tendencies and/or mirror acceptance among a cabalistic society. Skirts spread and time ends. Confusion may set in with the E.T.H.E.R. (theory of relativity). The movie's only a frame a reference to filmy illusions HERE AND NOW. In the clinch, Pepper Starlet she still wins out, but the fag and the poodle have to go.

Some things become invisible in strong light. The participants are blindfolded and led to the magic circle. Singly, they are brought before the burning bush that each might feel its warmth. Medicine woman stands alone at Red Rock Top. This is the middle of our circle. This is Cher Live! Le Mirage! Getting back to *Las Vegas*, the log lady performs her lipsing ritual in course of which she conjuncts long dead relatives. (Mother) nature of simultaneous event all ways and always related to that relative of ***Oh! we're so sorry, Uncle Albert,*** but you'd better clear that queer and his pooch outta here, and now. Gypsy! Tramp! Half-Breed! ***We're so easily called away.***

What's matter? The spirit at rest. It extends: to every space, its own time. **Lower Lee** is making the round now, anybody for a drink? Why it's old U.N.C.L.E. Einstein! Waitress whispers, something unsavory clings to this "space"—it's not an independent real thing. Diet Coke? We become aware of our **New Freedom**, of which, in course of necessity, it is always a difficult M.A.T.T.E.R. to make sensible use. Corporal **Klinger** does not exist 'in' space, but is spatially extended. It is impossible to 'be here' without participation.

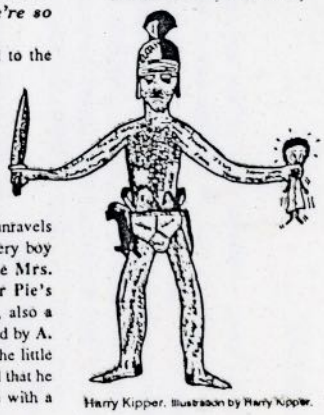
I'll have a *Long Island* Vanilla Ice and skip the umbrella. Mind wanders to when, sneaking softly into some back seat at a show, I expected to be unnoticed, non-existed, only hearing...the motion of a particle can only be observed by the collision of it with a quantum of radiation. Its motion is necessarily affected by its observation. Colonel K.R.S.N.A. returns with my drink. I demand an expansion! Existing is action performance. ***We're so sorry, Alfred Hitchcock, but we haven't done a bloody thing all day.*** Sacrifice as action liberation.

With this piece time is taken. Wondering about the strange phenomenon that in performing, (en-gagement), time sensed distorts against the view from a clock Time shrinks. Time soars. It's getting hot (in here?) and ***I believe I'm gonna rain.*** Getting back to *Links*, **Christ** dies with a heart on, while **Frank** and his assistant **Linda Mack** hump around a nearby wheelchair. **Frank** says to her: 'I Got Jew Babe.' **Linda**: "In your dreams, daddy." A-pall is cast by the synchronistic psilocybin mushroom of atomic bomb virtual performance art unreality. The essence is a fragrance by La Lizabeth Taylor. ***Oh, we're so sorry, Agent Cooper, but the kettle's on the boil and we're so easily led astray.***

In this latest sequel to the Suckcock classic, Buffalo Bill, I mean Norman is a shaman I mean showman, whose finally caught up to his crimes and spends his time safely locked away. Doctor Lecter unravels him deep and dark: every boy deserves a mummy like **Mrs. Bates. Mother Butter Pie's** husband, also Norman, also a general, also being played by A. Swastikamaker, sends the little son off to military school that he should not be left home with a houseful of hens. "No vunder eez zo funked up," Dale explains to his assistant, **Audrey Horne**. "All that cowboys and indians with his sister, and at such a tender age!" she replies forlornly.

Other rituals are now taking place. The burning bush variously 'speaks' and 'sings' to the initiates. **Charlie**, who has wisely changed his name to **Alexi Malenki**, is busy eating the disemboweled intestines of an 'innocent' bystander. A sacrifice made, the boon is granted: a most remarkable magic in chocolate and glitter splashed **Mike Labash**, a dervi-diva dancing as the soul of Harry Kipper, the Brian one. Not medieval superstition, no christian possession—this is the Age of Relativity (T.H.O.R.) Events separated in mundane time collide in the moment of sacrifice. Co-incidence. Time changes; the **Gipper**'s baggy British body bible belts and belches up on our same stage. Circumlocution of the circumcision from **Hannibal**'s flayed flesh the size of a mystic pizza—fulls the cycle here and the audience may join the high priestess in *L.U.N.A. tick tock*, ***Oh! we're so sorry, Uncle Arnold, but there's no one left at home.***

avec amour, in sacrifice:
G.I.JILL & le transparent butterfly

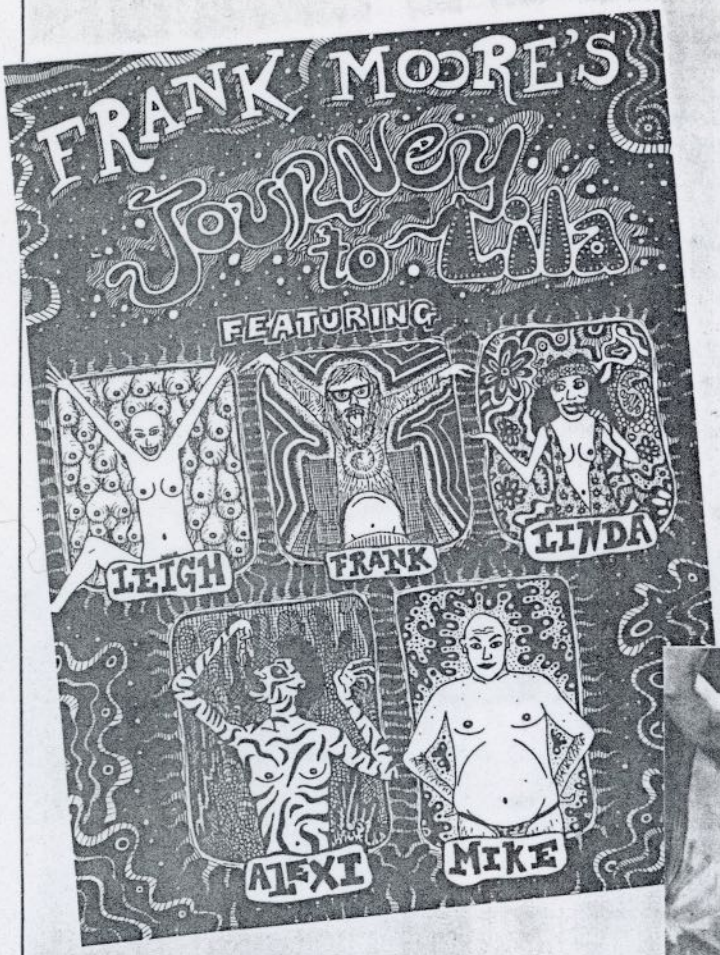


Harry Kipper. Illustration by Harry Kipper.

performance art magazine

SPECTATOR SPOTLIGHT

Art & Outrage!



In spite of being named on a Congressional Censorship Hit List, Frank Moore continues to explore the frontiers of the libido. An unflattering critique of the Bay Area-based performance artist was read into *The Congressional Record* in January along with similar right-wing outrage over Annie Sprinkle, a self-proclaimed "Post Porn Modernist."

"Taxpayers See Funds Descending Into Cesspool of 'Art' Filth — NEA Paints Veil of Secrecy On Art Works Felt To Be Obscene" screamed the *New York City Tribune* headline (dated February 5, 1990) "exposing" Moore, Sprinkle and other artists targeted in the fund-cutting witch-hunt led by Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-Long Beach, California).

If anything, the notoriety has been good for Moore, a 99% disabled quadriplegic, whose latest Bay Area appearance at Berkeley's Walden School in March was an unqualified success. "Normally, a lot of our audience moves toward the walls when it comes to the audience participation part of the show," explains Frank through his translator/companion Linda Mack. "But this time almost everyone took off their clothes and got into it. I wound up copping feels from a cute blonde, who was doing a story for *People* magazine. Whenever her boyfriend wasn't looking we'd go crazy!" he notes with a howl.

Undaunted by the threat of censorship, Frank will take his show on the road to Portland, Seattle, Vancouver, Cleveland, Chicago and New York City. "We've never had any problems with police and we don't anticipate any," Moore insists.

—Dave Patrick

April 20-26 1990 Spectator

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SPECTATOR will continue in its struggle to stem the wave of censorship descending upon us. In the tradition of the local alternative press from whence she came, *SPECTATOR* will strive to fill the gap left by mainstream newspapers. We will bring to you a perspective on sexuality in America which embraces diversity. Remember — sex is fun. Fun is good. Ignorance surrounding sex is dangerous. *SPECTATOR* will help provide the resources necessary for all of us to be informed and responsible and to flourish in our various sexual identities. Join us while we laugh and lust and revel in the playfulness that sexual freedom brings!

Publisher

Frank Moore

Out of Isolation, INTERDREAM

Frank Moore communicates his world to his audience. It is a slow world built on trust. Because for a "crip" (Moore's word to describe his cerebral palsy), time is elongated and things happen through cooperation. Frank Moore cannot move a distance of five feet on his own, but he can lead an audience by giant leaps through innerspace.

Out Of Isolation, Moore's simple two-character video at The Kitchen, described the initial meeting and subsequent week of physical therapy between a spastic (Moore) and his nurse (Linda Sibeo). At first the patient was unresponsive to the nurse's well-meaning but torturous, by-the-book approach: pulling at his limbs, massaging him with ice cubes and bristly paint brushes, petting and swatting him as she would a dog. Occasionally, she revealed a personal side, using the patient as her confidant. She decided to return on the weekend to pay him a non-professional visit, and by the end of the visit, they lay naked together, cuddling, sharing. Not only has the patient come out of isolation, but so has the nurse.

This is the pivotal message of every Frank Moore performance: that physical interaction—the sharing of energy, the sensual "eroplay"—is essential to life, and the more we strip it down to its basic level, the more we benefit from the force of the interaction.

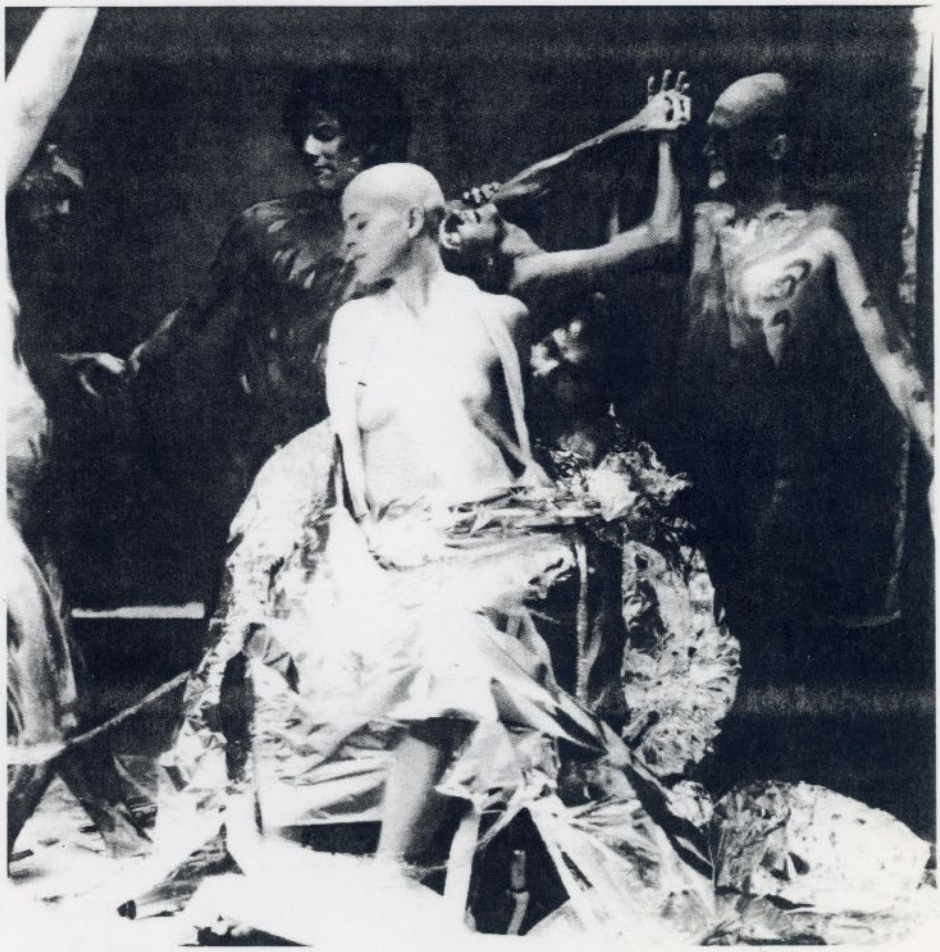
That same weekend, Frank Moore and Chero company presented *INTERDREAM* as part of New York University's "New Pathways For Performance" conference. Body painting, massage, primal music, chanted poetry—*INTERDREAM* contained all of Moore's favorite methods of communication, including the shaman's tent where he lay naked ready to receive audience members, collaborators, who chose to go deeper into the cave. Among the audience were members of "Disabled in Action" and "Artists With Disabilities, Inc." They greeted his performance with enthusiasm, and contributed to bridging the gap between artist and audience.

Because I had performed with Frank Moore twice, I thought that if I entered the cave as merely one of the audience members, I might feel a let down. Blindfolded, I was led to a clear space on the shaman's mat. I reached out and felt bodies, some clothed, some bare-skinned beneath my fingers. My clothes were a barrier, so I removed my blouse and bra. I felt Frank, his thick tongue and glasses, then I felt a woman's breasts, legs and arms, and I couldn't tell where one person ended and another one began. I lay with the god Shiva, half-man, half-woman, cradled by warm human flesh, so vulnerable, yet so safe. And then I began to cry. I cried my way out of isolation.

—*Veronica Vera*

Out of Isolation was presented at The Kitchen in New York City, October 6, 1990. *INTERDREAM* was presented at New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, as part of "New Pathways In Performance," October 7, 1990.

Veronica Vera is a literary artist. She is creator of the Theory of Sexual Evolution.



ERIC KROLL

Frank Moore and Chero company

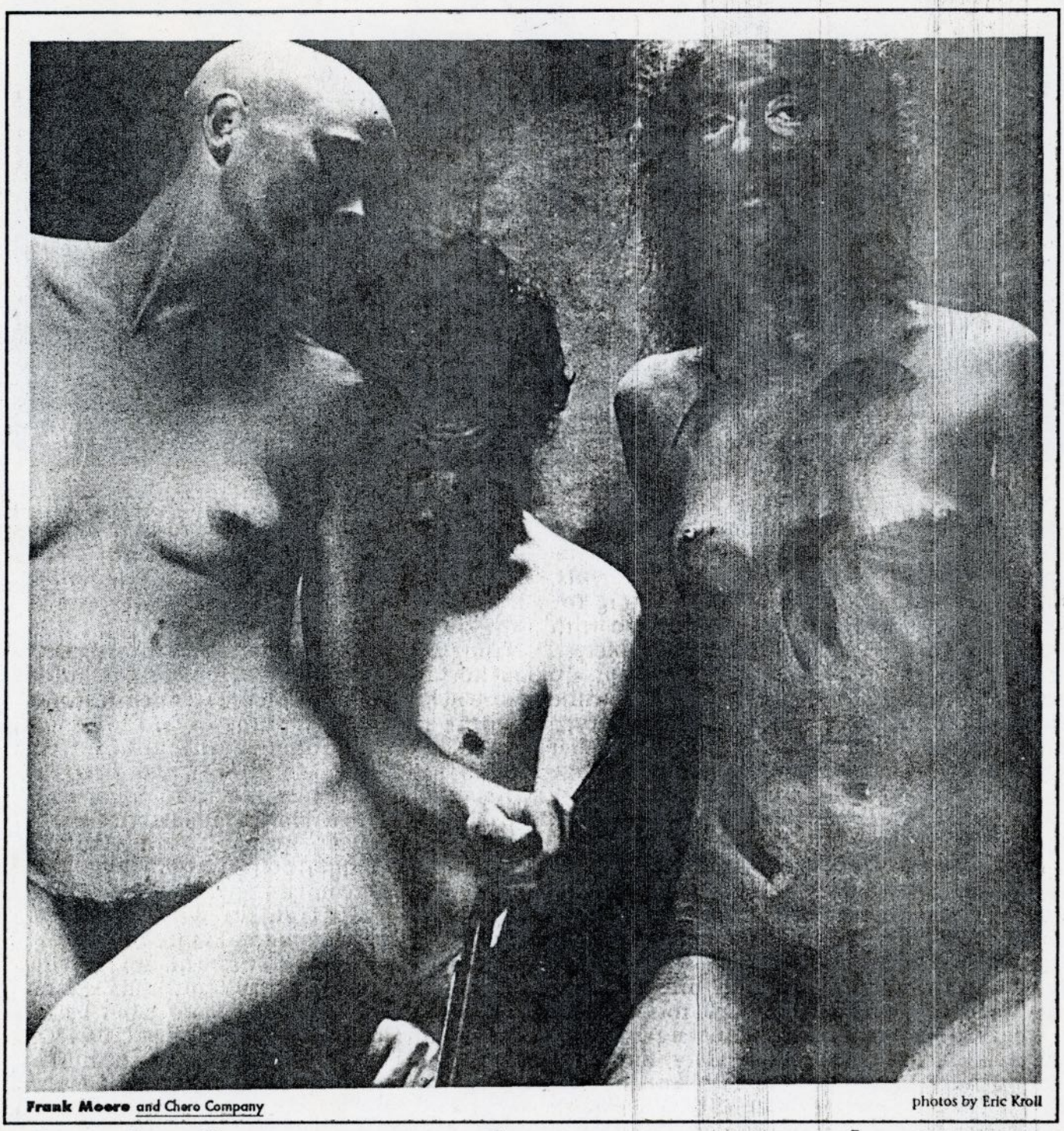
JUNE 1991

The Strangest Thing On Wheels

By John-Ivan Palmer

It's not easy keeping it up as a sex star. Look at John Holmes. Look at Linda Lovelace. Whatever happened to Bo Derek? John Travolta? The lips, the tits, the wide craws, the thirteen inchers don't seem to make it for long.

So how do you explain the disabled drooling hippy, self-described "deformed shaman" with cerebral palsy in a wheelchair, who has gotten people to pay him for sex since 1973, and whose popularity as an avant garde eroticist has not diminished but grown

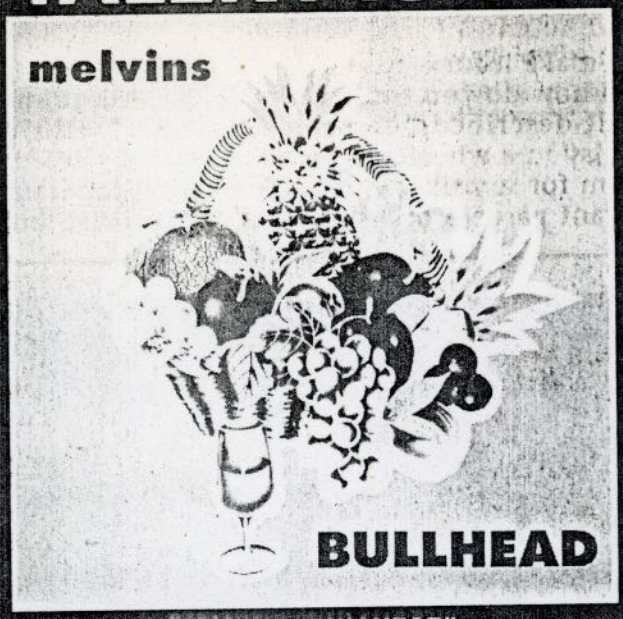


Frank Moore and Chero Company

photos by Eric Kroll

Crippled Sex Performer Frank Moore

TALENT IS OUR MIDDLE NAME



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huge enough to attract the attention of underground promo man Jesse Helms?

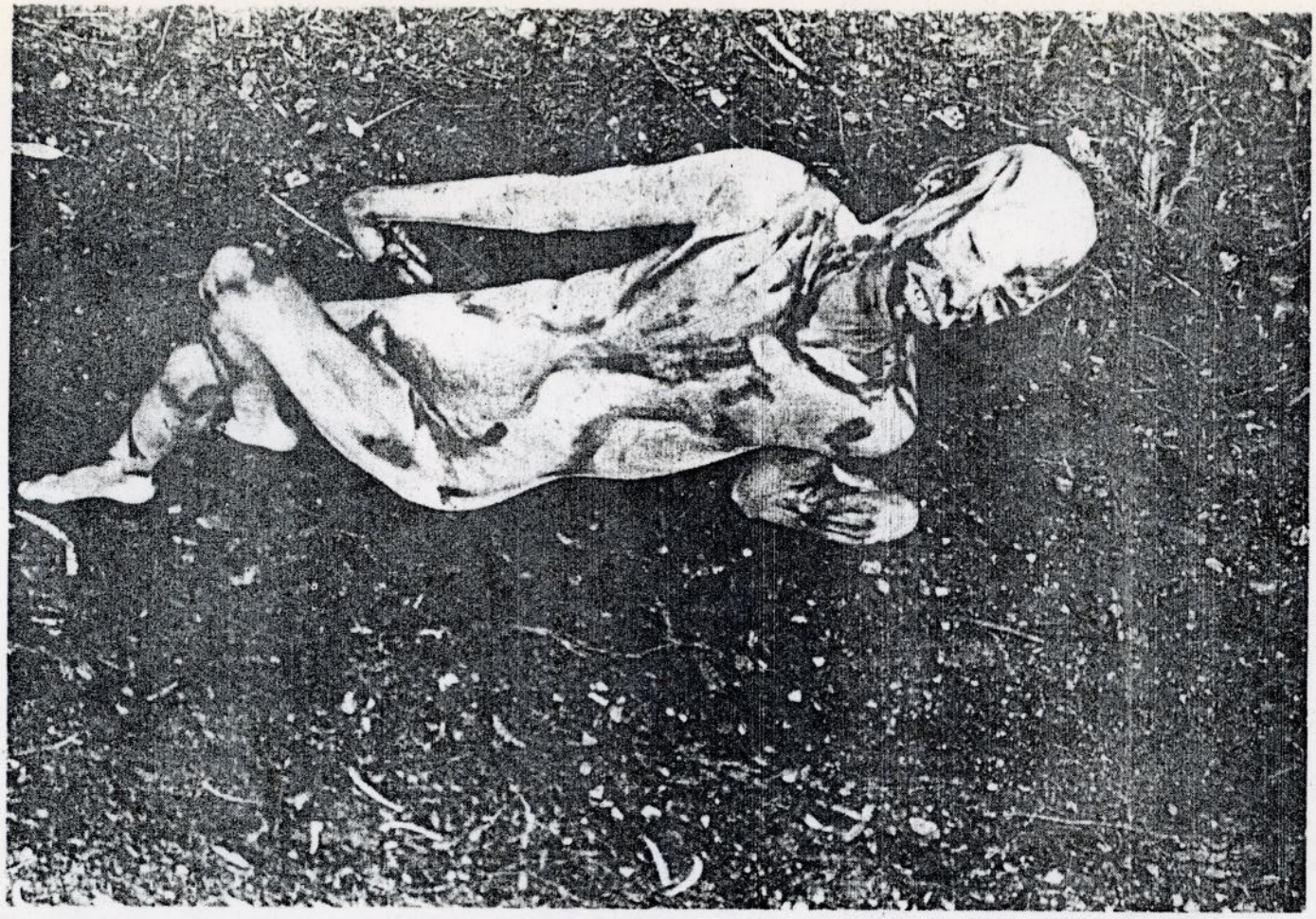
His name is Frank Moore, and he rounds out the increasing coterie of "handicapped" world talents, from astrophysicist Stephen Hawking to big toe novelist Christie Brown and paralyzed (also with cerebral palsy) memoirist Ruth Sienkiewicz-Mercer. Moore cannot speak except in guttural yelps. To converse with him you must patiently wait while he points to letters and words on a scrabble-type board with a pointer strapped to his head. After surveying his 20 year avalanche of sexual stage extravaganzas, articles, films and recent book, I see how he's totally deconstructed the very word "disabled."

In the same way that he's redefined "disabled," he's also redefined "performance." He has created what he calls "intimate theater where the line between audience and actors is erased...I focus on long ritualistic pieces, experimental theater, tacky and outrageous cabaret." His theatrical presentations blow away every orthodox approach to narrative, time, space and aesthetics by using bizarre, forbidden mixtures of music, nudity, audience stripping, fondling, exhibitionism and having participants/actors bodily thrown into or wrapped with a whole variety of substances. He performs in bars, theaters, nudist camps, genital jamborees like Media Gallery's "Sex-A-Rama" (S.F.), Ft. Mason Center's "Erotic Ball" (S.F.), and even right out on the street (Montgomery exit, S.F. BART station). He was featured in the movie *Mondo New York*. In 1985 he received a N.E.A. Fellowship (hi, Jesse!) for his work in the performance arts.

Naturally, he's been banned and investigated by the authorities. The Berkeley police got hold of *The Meat Act*, a video of Moore's which features naked people flopping in tubs of bloody meat, and thought it was some Satanic murder ritual. A headline in the Moonie-owned *New York City Tribune* referred to him as a "cesspool of art filth."

In his 1983 movie *Erotic Play*, described as "getting intimate with 60 humans," an assortment of people, including a polio victim, some kids and a female dwarf, remove their clothes and put on an assortment of disguises while talking about themselves. In the process Moore captures a variety of rare, honest moments and images of erotic beauty from a realm that transcends the norm. (A pamphlet of videos, books and tapes by Moore is available from Box 11445, Berkeley CA 94701.)

During this creative period he took his acting troupe over to practise his rewrite of *Lysistrata* in front of a captive audience—the crowds waiting in front of a Berkeley movie theater. The event was remembered by one woman as "pretty girls



Frank Moore as Feisto (for Frank Moore's video Feisto)

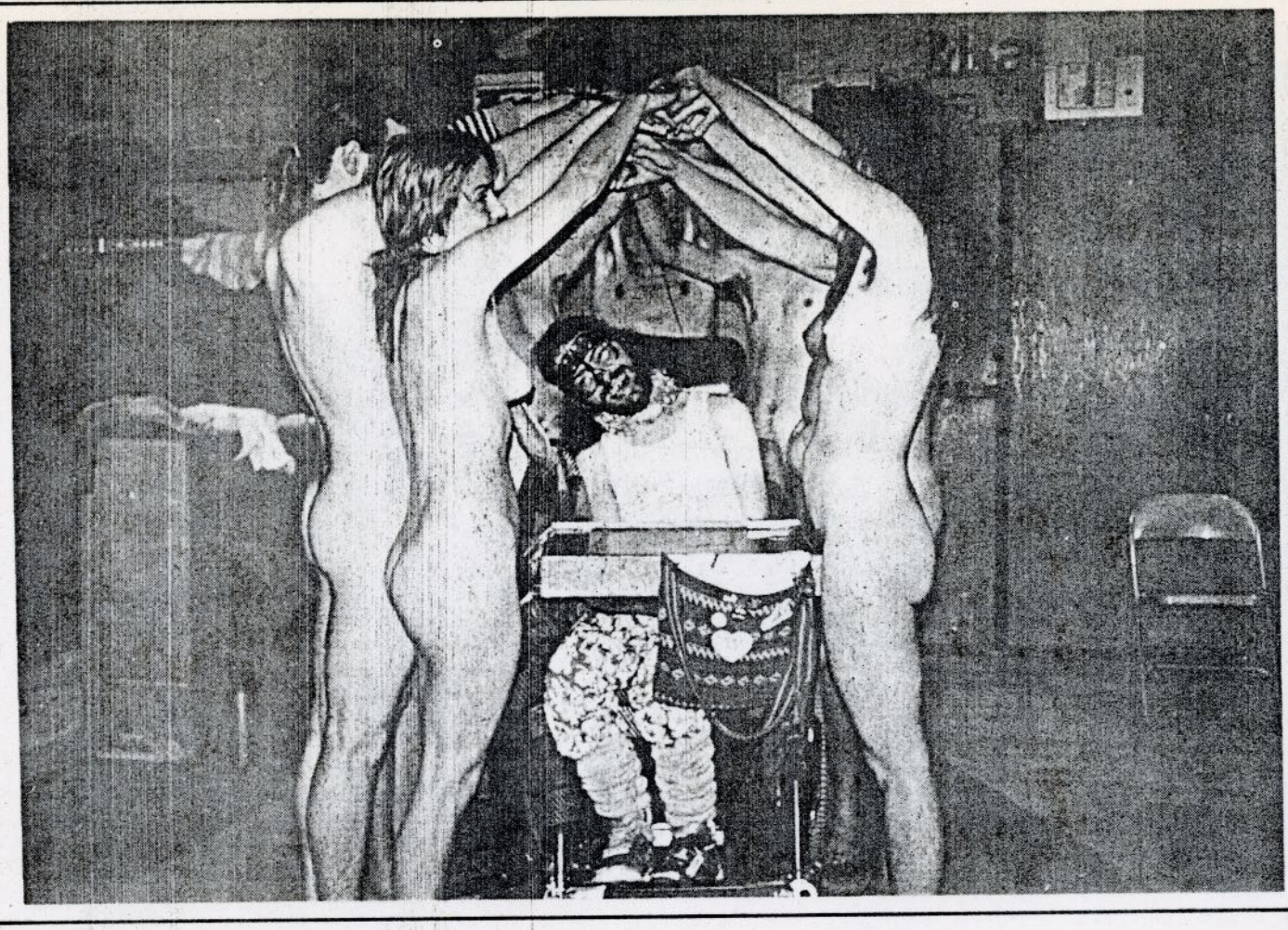
humping guys in wheelchairs next to the movie lines." The stage presentation—which at one point featured porn star Annie Sprinkle as a mentally retarded free spirit—was called "exploitative" because it involved showing "crips" (Moore's term) in nude and erotic situations.

His recent performance in Cleveland of *Journey to Lila,* in which the audience is led, blindfolded, one by one into a "cave" on stage where they spend 5 hours with Moore "destroying limits and breaking taboos," was advertised by the promoters as "not for the timid." Moore said once that what is "too intense, too vulnerable to be done in public may be where real art begins."

Moore has made good use of the old vaudeville axiom, "You need a gimmick." If you're 99 years old—or 99% disabled—you not only can get away with just about any sexual outrage, but be applauded for it. After earning degrees in English (Univ. of New Mex.) and performance/video (San Francisco Art Inst.), he moved to Berkeley and began his lifetime wish to "see people nude. And touch them." He started off by looking up skirts and copping feels off people as they walked by. Then he found a subtler, more successful approach for his sexual paganism. He parked his wheelchair on the street with a sign that read, "I don't want money, I want you."

It worked. Pretty soon, figuring he wasn't a date rape, women were acting out "intensely erotic scenes" in the name of art and free expression while he photographed them, sometimes with film in the camera. Finding these experiences rewarding in a non-threatening context, the word got around and people started offering him money for his permission to let it all hang out.

Looking at his playbills and book illustrations (all by Michael LaBash, a Moore "apprentice"), I feel myself falling into a psychedelic time warp back to the California of touchy-feely clubs like the Eselan Institute and the Sexual Freedom League, where people brought their kids along to the orgies. Moore was definitely making an impression back then, spazzing out in his wheelchair, dropping acid, living in communes, and polishing his knob. Then AIDS, religion and the sex negative bundists of the feminist movement tweaked the sexual revolution down to a shriveled bud. However, from this disaster rose the Phoenix of post-sexual revolution sexuals like Veronica Vera and Linda Montano who took the Dick out of Jane with lesbo-auto-ero shows, films and seminars. Along with Frank Moore and assorted others from the previous sexual underclass, they have upstaged the Ron Jeremy-type



Playing with Reality (Berkeley, Calif.)

white males at exhibitionism's downstage center.

Today Moore's wild performance rituals are produced nationally to enviable critical acclaim. Now he himself shows up in the avant garde media posing nude in his wheelchair, his big whopper of a giraffe's tongue lolling out his mouth, naked women in body paint surrounding or climbing on his slender body with satyr's beard, wild hair and classic (fully functional) uncircumcised phallus hanging in the breeze. He looks pretty damn good. Operating through computers, voice synthesizers, sensory transducers and whirring hydraulic gizmos, he is as close as anyone has ever gotten to becoming a true bionic sex star.

In the early 70's he was present at the birth of American punk—performing weekly at the Mabuhy Cafe in San Francisco, doing a theatrical collage called *The Outrageous Beauty Review* where women burlesqued Elvis and The Supremes while others dressed like Green Berets and ripped off each other's clothes before wrestling in vats of warm noodles and pudding. Like sex itself, sometimes it was good and other times it was, as a reviewer in *High Performance* once put it, a "pathetic...sick joke," accompanied by jeering punks throwing popcorn and even beer bottles at the performers. But that didn't keep Moore from truckin' on, surviving one cultural trend after another while at the same time pack-ratting their better tidbits. With shows like *The Erotic Test, Intimate Performances, Random Gestures, and Cabaret of Chaos,* to name a few, he purposely blurred the distinction between performance, orgy and loitering. His presentations run as long as 12, 24, even 48 hours, which gives a totally new meaning to the term "rising and falling action." Moore explains this as a "slow, increasing shock" that weeds out the sleazeballs in the audience. Nonetheless, some of Moore's performances have fallen below the level of critical mass in his opinion and the audience has been given their money back with a smile—which in itself is an interesting piece of conceptual theater. "I am ruthless in pursuing the inner quality I seek in people."

Given his physical condition, it's a wonder he gets through the lunch hour much less conducts a prolific travel, writing and performing career. He says, "I am lucky I'm an exhibitionist in this body. I like to have people look at me...It is not a disability, it is my tool, my meal ticket." One of his pastimes is to go into fancy restaurants with his sybaritically beautiful wife and collaborator, Linda Mac (whom he met in a travel agency while looking down her blouse), and watch people's reactions as she fawns

over him, wiping his mouth and picking food out of his beard. Frank and Linda are not the least ashamed. What the hell, if you've got it, flaunt it.

What do you say to a crippled sex shaman? It's a little like yelling across a canyon. Because he can't speak I had to write out the questions and then wait a few days for him to peck out the answers letter at a time on a computer with a stick tied to his head.

Your Flesh: Did you really use to hitchhike in a wheelchair?

Frank Moore: I used to hitch to Boston and NYC, stay for a week without money, going into restaurants to ask for throw-away food but getting incredible meals. The cops picked me up for hitchhiking on the freeway outside of Hartford, CT.

YF: What were you doing living in Morocco at 8 years of age?

FM: My dad was in the Air Force.

YF: I read somewhere that as a kid you wanted to translate the bible into Arabic. Do you know Arabic?

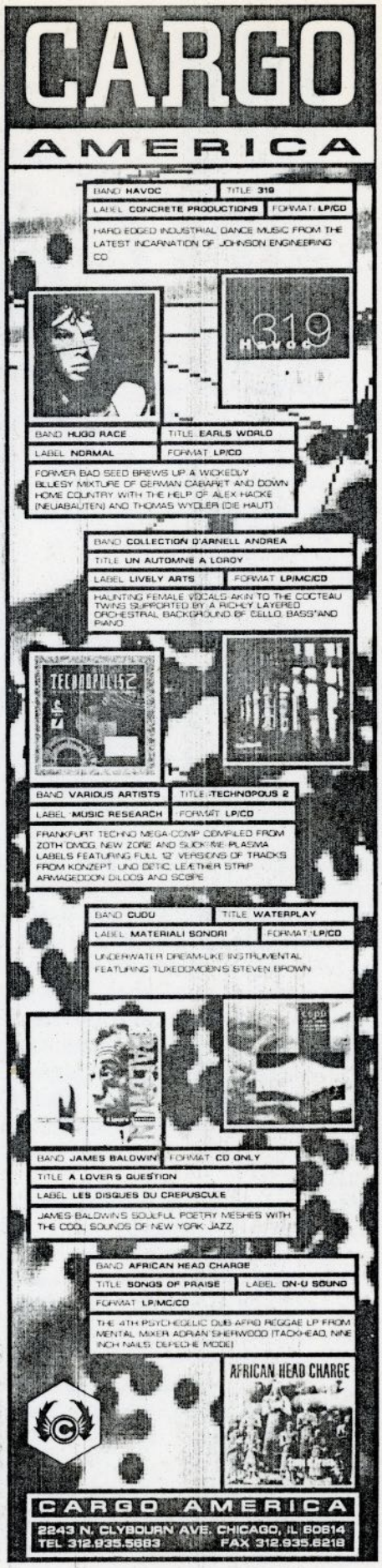
FM: I do not. Which is why my mom laughed at my idea, which is why I ran away from home...falling out of my chair when she was not looking...got out the front door and dragged myself to the gate before she got me. It takes more than facts to convince an 8 year old who sees Arabs shitting in the field, whose best friend is an Arab beggar boy who brings his monkey to play. When I was 13 in bible school one day the kids meanly attacked a girl they thought was "loose," driving her crying out of the room. So I stopped going to church. In high school I read de Sade, *Story of O, The Pearl,* and other erotica.

YF: You have been married for some time to artist Linda Mac who collaborates with you on projects. You were reported to have married a "Debbie" at some commune in Albuquerque, and, according to an article by Veronica Vera, married "the homecoming queen." You also have a biological son, Koala who, you've said, "has 5 parents instead of 2." Would you care to set the genealogical/matrimonial record straight?

FM: For the last 20 some years I have lived in tribal groupings. In the commune in Massachusetts, I legally married a Princeton drop-out. But the "marriage" quickly became a tribal unit by more people coming into it after we moved back to New Mexico. This tribal grouping had from 5 to 7 people during those years. This is how my son, Koala, who now is 16, had multi-parents. When we moved to Berkeley after Koala was born I met Linda. Basically we believe in long-term committed relationships, not marriage which is based in ownership.

YF: Why was your show canceled with such publicity at The Lab in 1988?

FM: I got a call from The Lab saying that the committee had accepted my proposal. We set dates and agreed on terms. Meanwhile I went to UCLA to lecture in classes on performance art. I tried to get the students to stop thinking in terms of what is in fashion, what the trends are, what the galleries and the grant-givers and the critics and the universities want at any given time. The day I got back home I got a call from an angry man who said, "Frank Moore, you are out. You are not performing at The Lab." It was Allan Millar, the director and one of the founders. Allan said, "You are old fashioned. You have nothing new to say. You are not experimental." I said I was holding The Lab to its commitment, that I would be there on the previously agreed upon dates. He was outraged that I was not being "reasonable." He threatened to run me over if he saw me. He threatened to blacklist me, to ruin my career. The art world was divided over it. Artists like Karen Finley and Rachel Rosenthal supported me because they have encountered similar things. The Lab got so many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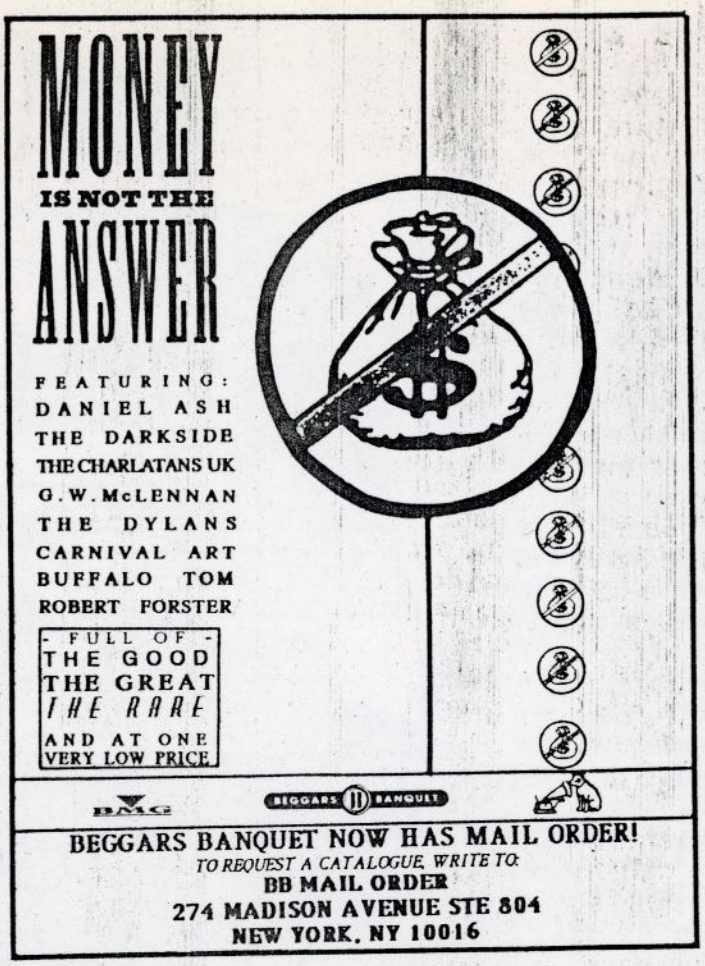

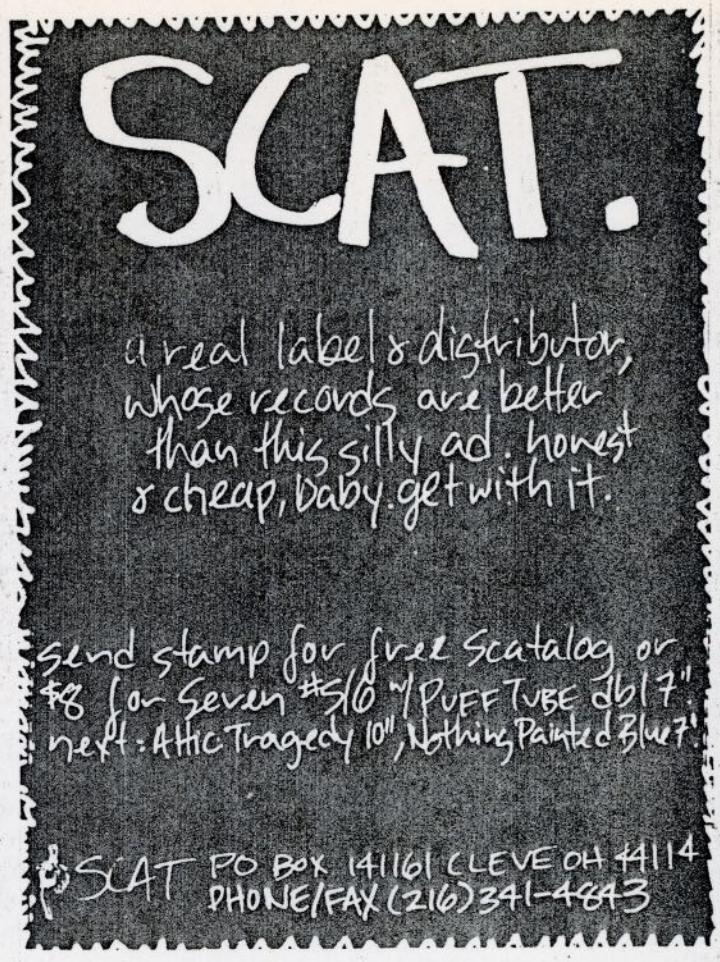
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calls that they had to put a recorded message to the effect: "Frank Moore is not booked here, never was...because he is not an artist, just a troublemaker." On the night we were booked we arrived nude. The Lab was closed. A cop came, but after we told him what we were doing he wished us luck for the next night. The Lab event has closed almost all of the Bay Area "alternative" galleries to me. It is much more dangerous than Jesse.

YF: In a review of your *Outrageous Beauty Revue* it was said, "nude paraplegics slid across the stage covered with chocolate." Who were those paraplegics?

FM: First of all paraplegics is the wrong word. A paraplegic is someone who can not move his body or parts thereof. I can move all of my body spastically. It is a case of where one reporter used the word incorrectly, and then the word took on a long life of its own in the press. Another immortal phrase is "99% disabled." It has no real meaning. There are disabled stand-up comedians, singers, actors, etc. What sets me apart on many different levels from most artists with physical disability is that my disability is not the subject of my art, only one of my tools in my bag of tricks. This is not politically correct. I am in effect banned from Berkeley's large disabled community because of this, because I have a major position in the regular art scene. A major disabled organization could not book me because of the political pressures.

YF: How would you respond to critics who have implied that your performance/rituals are recycled hippy be-ins and Eselan-type group gropes?

FM: It is a lazy criticism. It is saying my work is old fashioned because it appears to be similar to the 60's. I just laugh and say it is much more old fashioned than that...it goes way far back to the caves and campfires, shamanic rituals. By labeling nudity as a passe 60's curiosity, it avoids examining what nudity does in ritual. Face it, if what I do did not address what people are dealing with now, you would not be writing this, Jesse would not be after me, people would not get inspired by the work.

YF: You've obviously done more with your "1%" non-disability than most people do with full faculties. If you could magically increase just one of your faculties what would it be?

FM: Since I can magically increase all of my faculties, I am 100% able...and that's a fact, Jack. One thing for sure—he's not likely to be widely imitated. ❀

(Frank Moore, Box 11445 Berkeley CA 94701)

FOREWORD TO FORUM 25 YEARS CELEBRATION COMPILATION

by Tuppy Owens

Thank goodness for Forum! It's the haven where sexually aware people can turn to when they need to be comforted that they are not alone. This is especially true for people with special tastes - if you buy Forum, you'll never feel odd again! Somehow, Forum combines responsibility with fun, so that, not only does it make you feel OK about your sexuality, you also get cheered up.

Forum has served this purpose for 25 years. It is as important now as ever before because nothing has really improved in the world out there. Ignorance and hypocrisy still reign. I can't believe that a recent issue of a popular British trendy fashion/feature magazine* has 35 pages devoted to sex which are crammed with uptight values, inaccuracies, myths and cliches. Written by fashion writers and other young know-alls, these pages will confuse thousands of young minds that are already getting so many mixed messages about sex, porn and morality that they hold no hope of ever sorting things out for themselves.

One of the things I like about Forum is that it's so incredibly British. Eccentric yet down to earth. Unlike those trendy magazines that are heavily influenced by American culture and have international aspirations, Forum is about every-day British folk and what they get up to in their bedrooms, and under the desk at work, etc. And, as every issue proves, there's always something new and fascinating about sex. How lucky we are that the most enjoyable subject on earth is also the most boundless.

But what of the NEXT 25 years? It's interesting to note that the all the staff on Forum have been female for the past five years and this fits in with a trend that I have been aware of for some long time and has now been defined by friend of mine, Frank Moore (an American - see what a hypocrite I am?). He calls it the cherotic movement. This is not unlike the so-called sexual revolution of the sixties, but a physical/spiritual movement that redefines and expands sexual, spiritual, social concepts of reality, and it is being initiated by strong lusty women. Many anarchist teenagers are looking to these women as role models, something both I and female Forum editors are experiencing right now. Young students are wanting guidance on their college theses, chosen topics being deep, meaningful aspects of sex.

This cherotic movement is quite new. After the 'free-

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love' sixties, ambition for success and consumerism took over, feminism became aggressive, people became repressed and shallow again. Let's hope the movement will grow into a whole new inspiration for humanity so that pleasure will, once again, become the prime reason for existence.

Forum will then become more adventurous, as young people put their energies into writing imaginative erotica and sharing experiences. They will revitalise the spirits of the rest of us as we sag in our fight through this age of AIDS and censorship. We certainly have lived through the toughest era of all - no sooner did we find hope for freedom in the sixties as it was whisked from under our feet. Even Forum is not free to publish anything they wish. But the young can DEMAND freedom, and will. Madonna and most young bands are a great inspiration for them to assert their sexuality, yuppy parents offer an ideal reason to rebel.

We should be all set for the Cherotic Revolution! Rave on, readers, rave on.

* I'm actually talking about this month's Blitz but guess you won't want me to mention the title.

Gnosis
A Journal of the Western Inner Traditions

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REVIEWS

That Old White Magic

Cherotic Magic *by Frank Moore*. Spiritual Revolution Press, P.O. Box 60327, Palo Alto, CA 94306, 1990; 107 pp., $15.

Frank Moore's *Cherotic Magic* presents an innovative and extremely individual view of magic wherein one will find little about candles, incense, and the like, but much about the structure of the universe and our ability to live within it as creatures of ecstasy. Moore is a well-known performance artist whose life has been a testament to the power of the magical path. Born quadriplegic, he has risen to a position of note in artistic circles and to a level of great sophistication as a teacher of the magical path. Now, in *Cherotic Magic*, the esoteric bases of both his art and his magic have been made available in written form.

Moore's work revolves around his very personal, yet universal, concepts of "eroplay," a practice very similar to Tantra, "Chero," the life force, and "Erour," the strength of vulnerability. These subtle terms, which represent extensions of archetypal forces from new perspectives, are complemented by a rich vision of the interconnectedness of all being.

The context of this book is also quite important. *Cherotic Magic* is set up as the text for a training course that Moore offers to serious and committed students. It is possible to merely read this book and derive much treasure, but there are those who may choose to work with Moore at a serious level of magical attainment. Having met him several times and having moved in similar circles for several years, I would say that those who choose this path will recognize his sincerity and potential. This is a path which requires a far more serious commitment than most are capable of giving, yet even the reading of *Cherotic Magic* should open up new vistas in the realm of magic. —Timothy O'Neill

T D R

The Drama Review *a journal of performance studies*

Letters, Etc.

A Call for Performers
Museum of Love-Making

IMAGINE. IMAGINE WALKING DOWN THE SIDEWALK AND SEEING ON A POSTER NUDE BODIES MELTING INTO ONE ANOTHER, FLOATING INTO ONE ANOTHER IN A SOFT SEA OF PASSIONS UNLIMITED, COCK TREES GROWING OUT OF CUNT POTS, TIT EYES LAUGHING GENTLY AS THE NAVEL IS SUCKING THE WHOLE UNIVERSE OFF. YOU WONDER WHY THE COPS, OR SOME FEMINIST MORALIST, OR SOME BORN-AGAIN RIGHT-TO-SUFFER T.V. WATCHER HASN'T LONG AGO RIPPED DOWN THIS OFFENSE TO THE MORAL ORDER.

YOU LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT THE LIQUID MOVING BODIES, AND DANCING LETTERS ARE SQUEEZED OUT FROM THE TWISTING FORMS. YOU MAKE OUT THAT YOU ARE INVITED TONIGHT TO THE "MUSEUM OF LOVE-MAKING," WHATEVER THAT IS. MUST BE SOME PERFORMANCE ART SHIT. YOU HAVE GONE TO PERFORMANCES THAT PROMISE TO BE ABOUT SEX, TO BE PASSIONATELY EROTIC, BUT WHEN YOU GOT THERE, PALE FACES IN BLACK TIGHTS TALKED IN MONO-DRONES ABOUT ISOLATION, ABOUT FATHERS' HIDDEN LUSTINGS AFTER 2-YEAR-OLDS OF BOTH SEXES . . . WITH NUDITY, HUMAN TOUCHING, SWEATING PASSION NEVER EVEN IN SIGHT, LET ALONE EXPLICIT. BUT THIS POSTER AGAIN AROUSES HOPE. IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND, THERE IS ANOTHER HANDOUT SAYING, "FOR MADMEN ONLY."

IMAGINE. IMAGINE STANDING IN FRONT OF A MULTICOLORED CURTAIN IN A GALLERY, STANDING, WAITING, STANDING WITH PEOPLE WHO, LIKE YOURSELF, DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT. YOU HEAR CLASSICAL MUSIC PLAYING SOFTLY SOMEWHERE. NOW THREE NUDES, FULLY BRIGHTLY SOFT BODY-PAINTED, APPEAR FROM THE CURTAIN. THEY CHANT INSTRUCTIONS . . . "NO TALKING, STAY ON THIS SIDE OF THE ROPE, BUT YOU CAN WALK TO ANY POINT IN THE OBSERVING AREA AT ANY TIME."

NOW YOU ARE BEING USHERED BY THE NUDES BEHIND THE CURTAIN OF TABOOS. YOU FIND YOURSELF HOLDING ONTO A PLUSH RED ROPE . . . THIS ROPE RUNS AROUND THE ENTIRE LARGE ROOM. IN FRONT OF YOU, BEHIND THE ROPE, A COUPLE SITS ON A MAT IN WARM SOFT LIGHT. THEY ARE KISSING, NOT DRAMATIC, BUT LIKE THEY HAVE BEEN KISSING EACH OTHER FOR YEARS.

YOU READ THE CARD PINNED TO THE ROPE: "MARY AND ROGER SMITH HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR 15 YEARS. BOTH ARE TEACHERS. THEY HAVE TWO CHILDREN."

ONLY NOW YOU REALIZE THAT THEY ARE AN OLDER COUPLE, THAT MARY IS UNZIPPING HIS PANTS TO RUB HIS LIMP WRINKLED COCK. THEY ARE GIGGLING LIKE KIDS WATCHING CARTOONS. YOU TRY TO LOOK AWAY, UNCOMFORTABLE, SEEING SOMETHING TOO PRIVATE. BUT AS YOU LOOK AROUND THE ROOM, YOU SEE COUPLES, MAYBE A TRIAD OR TWO, ON MATS MAKING LOVE. YOU LOOK BACK TO ROGER AND MARY, HER PANTIES ARE NOW OFF. HE IS FINGERING HER PINK LIPS GREYING BLONDE HAIR. YOU CAN SEE RIGHT UP HER INTO DARKNESS. STILL NO DRAMATICS, NO CONTEST OF PERFORMANCE, JUST WARM SEX PLEASURE OF YEARS OF LOVE-MAKING.

YOU MOVE ON, COMING TO GIL, A LAWYER, AND HENRY, A HOUSEHUSBAND . . . A COUPLE OF EIGHT YEARS. GIL SLOWLY MOVING BACK AND FORTH IN HENRY'S BUTT. HENRY MAKES LOUD DRAMATIC SIGHS. MEANWHILE AN OLD WOMAN SUCKS OFF HER YOUNG BLACK LOVER OF THREE YEARS. ON ANOTHER MAT, TWO SWEATING NUDES EAT DEEP FROM EACH OTHER'S SWEET PUSSIES. ACROSS THE ROOM, YOU SEE A HANGING WOMAN MOANING ORGASMS AS HER HUSBAND OF EIGHT YEARS WHIPS HER LOVINGLY WITH A CAT-OF-NINE-TAILS. A BEAUTIFUL CHINESE WOMAN PUTS HER SPASTIC MATE DEEP WITHIN HER. THE SOUNDS, THE HUMAN SMELLS OF SEX AND SWEAT, THE SIGHT OF ALL OF THESE REAL MOVING TOUCHING PLAYING FUCKING IN THEIR OWN LOVE RELATIONSHIPS CREATES AN OVERWHELMING ALTERNATIVE REALITY WHICH RECLAIMS SEX IN ALL ITS FORMS AS A DIRECT EXPRESSION OF LIFE AND LOVE.

THIS IS THE PERFORMANCE I AM PLANNING TO DO. ALTHOUGH I HAVE USED NUDITY AND EROTICISM IN MY WORK, I HAVE NEVER BEFORE USED ACTUAL SEX. THE TIME IS RIGHT TO DO SO. MAGICALLY AND POLITICALLY. THIS PERFORMANCE WILL SEND A POWERFUL MESSAGE. THE FUNDAMENTALISTS, WHETHER FEMINIST OR CHRISTIAN OR POLITICAL, HAVE ATTACKED SEX WITH SMOKESCREENS OF VIOLENT, ABUSIVE, EXPLOITIVE SEX. THEY SAY THEY ARE NOT AGAINST SEX ITSELF, JUST . . . THIS PERFORMANCE WILL EXPOSE THIS AS A BALDFACE LIE.

I AM LOOKING FOR ALL TYPES OF LOVING COUPLES (TRIADS, WHATEVER) TO BE IN THIS PIECE. ALL RACES AND AGES ARE WELCOME. I FIRST PLAN TO STAGE IT IN THE BAY AREA, BUT THEN ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SO I WILL NEED COUPLES IN EACH CITY.

WE HAVE SOME ARBITRARY FRAMEWORKS. A COUPLE HAS TO HAVE BEEN TOGETHER COMMITTED FOR AT LEAST A YEAR. EACH PERSON HAS TO BE 18 OR OLDER. THERE IS NO MONEY INVOLVED. INTERESTED COUPLES SHOULD WRITE ME A LETTER DESCRIBING YOUR RELATIONSHIP AND TELLING WHY YOU WANT TO BE A PART OF THIS MAGICAL EXPLICIT PERFORMANCE. MY ADDRESS IS: FRANK MOORE, P.O. BOX 11445, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94701-2445.

FRANK MOORE
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

TDR

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statements by Frank Moore

TWO MOORE

ART IS NOT TOOTHPASTE

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO CATHERINE SCHULER'S "SPECTATOR RESPONSE AND COMPREHENSION: THE PROBLEM OF KAREN FINLEY'S *constant state of desire*" (TDR 34, no. 1 [T125]).

I WAS SHOCKED AND FRIGHTENED AT THE KIND OF THINKING WHICH SCHULER'S WRITING REPRESENTS. SCHULER CLEARLY DOES NOT LIKE FINLEY'S WORK. SCHULER SEEMS TO PIN HER DISLIKE ON THE SYMBOLS AND WORDS FINLEY USES, CALLING THEM "PORNOGRAPHIC. [. . .] ANGRY, CONFRONTATIONAL, AND DELIBERATELY PROVOCATIVE [. . .] SOMETHING VAGUELY OBSCENE [. . .] SHE [FINLEY] USES LANGUAGE AND IMAGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOST REPUGNANT FORMS OF HETEROSEXUAL SADOMASOCHISTIC PORNOGRAPHY."

THE WORDS "PORNOGRAPHIC" AND "OBSCENE" ARE WORDS WHICH HAVE HIGH EMOTIONAL CONTENT AND VERY LITTLE, IF ANY, CONTENT OF DEFINABLE MEANING. THEY ARE WORDS WHICH THE ENEMIES OF HUMAN FREEDOM SUCH AS JESSE HELMS USE AS A SMOKESCREEN TO JUSTIFY SUPPRESSION AND REPRESSION. IN THESE DAYS OF NEW McCARTHYISM, CARELESS USE OF SUCH WORDS BY PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES FEMINISTS AND HUMANISTS CAN HAVE MOST DANGEROUS RESULTS.

TO ME IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT FINLEY HAS ALWAYS USED WORDS AND IMAGES IN A SUBVERSIVE POETIC WAY TO BATTLE EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE. THERE ARE LEGITIMATE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ANGRY INTENSITY OF THE WORK JADING PEOPLE, AND QUESTIONS ABOUT DOES THE WORK OFFER ALTERNATIVES TO WHAT IT IS DESTROYING . . . DOES IT HAVE TO OFFER SUCH ALTERNATIVES?

WHAT IS DISTURBING ABOUT SCHULER'S ESSAY IS HER LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT ART DOES, HOW ART

WORKS. HER BASIC POINT IN THE PIECE IS THE NEED THAT SHE SEES FOR "MORE TRADITIONAL, BENIGN FORMS OF FEMINIST PERFORMANCE." BUT INSTEAD OF EXPLORING WHAT THESE FORMS ARE OR MIGHT BE, SHE ATTACKS FINLEY AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AVANT-GARDE. WE LIBERAL-RADICAL-REVOLUTIONARIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PRONE TO THIS KIND OF SELF-DEFEATING CANNIBALIZATION OF OUR OWN KIND.

WHAT IS SCARY ABOUT SCHULER'S ARTICLE IS SHE DOES NOT SEEM TO THINK HER OWN REACTION TO THE ART IS ENOUGH TO TALK ABOUT. INSTEAD, SHE INVENTS A FICTIONAL CHARACTER CALLED "AVERAGE SPECTATOR" OR, BETTER YET, "THE AVERAGE FEMALE SPECTATOR." IF THIS FICTIONAL CHARACTER RESPONDS "APPRECIATIVELY" TO THE ART, THEN THE ART WORKS AS "A VEHICLE FOR MEANINGFUL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS." BUT IF THE WORK LEAVES OUR AVERAGE FEMALE SPECTATOR IN CONFUSION, FRUSTRATION, ANGER, REJECTION, THEN THE WORK HAS FAILED. SCHULER TRIES TO BREATHE SCIENTIFIC LIFE INTO THIS CARDBOARD REALITY BY CONDUCTING A POP EXIT POLL AFTER ONE OF FINLEY'S SHOWS. FIFTEEN PEOPLE ARE NOT A SCIENTIFIC SAMPLE. THIS EXIT POLL GIVES THIS FICTIONAL AVERAGE FEMALE SPECTATOR AN ILLUSION OF IMPORTANCE IN SOME SOCIOLOGICAL-ANTHROPOLOGICAL UNREALITY. WHAT SCHULER DOES NOT REALIZE IS THE ONLY IMPORTANT THING IS WHAT THE ART MADE HER FEEL. ANYTHING ELSE IS PUTTING DANGEROUS FRAMES AROUND THE ART.

DURING OVER 20 YEARS OF PERFORMING, I HAVE LEARNED THAT THE APPARENT AUDIENCE RESPONSE DURING THE PERFORMANCE OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PERFORMANCE IS RARELY THE PERSON'S FINAL RESPONSE. SOME PEOPLE WHO LOVED THE PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE AS IT WAS HAPPENING GO HOME AND FREAK OUT. OTHER PEOPLE WHO WERE BORED, HOSTILE, OR EVEN WALKED OUT, VERY OFTEN COME UP TO ME DAYS, WEEKS, EVEN YEARS LATER TO SAY THE PERFORMANCE TURNED OUT TO BE AN IMPORTANT EVENT IN THEIR LIVES. THIS NONLINEAR DYNAMIC IS SO COMMON. IT MAY TAKE YEARS FOR SOMEONE TO COME TO TERMS WITH A WORK OF ART.

THIS IS WHY TO LINK ART TO THE APPARENT "SPECTATOR RESPONSE AND COMPREHENSION" BRINGS ART DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF A TV SHOW WHOSE WORTH IS MEASURED BY THE OVERNIGHT RATINGS; DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF THE POLITICIAN WHO CHANGES HIS IMAGE AND VIEWS ACCORDING TO THE POLLS; DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF THE HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THAT IS RECUT AFTER A NEGATIVE TEST AUDIENCE RESPONSE.

. . . AND . . .

. . . AN OPEN LETTER TO SENATOR JESSE HELMS

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. I HAVE READ IN the *l.a. times* AND THE *village voice* THAT YOU HAVE THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE INVESTIGATING KAREN FINLEY, JOHANNA WENT, CHERI GAULKE, AND MYSELF. WHY ARE YOU GOING BEHIND OUR BACKS? WHY AREN'T YOU TALKING DIRECTLY TO US ARTISTS, INSTEAD OF HAVING THE GAO, AT THE TAXPAYERS' EXPENSE, GOING TO THE GALLERIES AND THE THEATRES WE HAVE PERFORMED IN TO ASK VEILED QUESTIONS ABOUT US?

HERE I AM. LET'S TALK, MAN TO MAN. IT IS THE AMERICAN WAY. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ME? YOU HAD MY ADDRESS BECAUSE I SENT YOU MY ARTICLE ABOUT HOW I THINK WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS PATENTLY OFFENSIVE TO THE BILL OF RIGHTS. AFTER ALL, IT IS THE AMERICAN WAY TO DIRECTLY CONFRONT YOUR OPPONENT, GIVING HIM A CHANCE TO ANSWER, AND GIVING THE PEOPLE A DIALOG. BUT YOU DID NOT SEND ME A LETTER. YOU SENT THE GAO.

THIS IS NOT AN INVESTIGATION FOR INFORMATION. IT IS AN INVESTIGATION FOR EXTORTION. IT IS PART OF THE CAMPAIGN TO SMEAR US FOUR ARTISTS—AS WELL AS HOLLY HUGHES, TIM MILLER, ANNIE SPRINKLE, AND JOHN FLECK—AS UNTOUCHABLE, UNFUNDABLE, UNBOOKABLE. THE PAINT THAT IS USED TO SMEAR IS THAT OF "OBSCENE ARTISTS." ARE YOU TRYING TO FIND OUT WHETHER OR NOT OUR WORK FALLS INTO THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF OBSCENE? HAVE YOU SEEN MY PERFORMANCES OR EVEN TALKED TO ANYONE WHO HAS? HAVE YOU READ MY WRITINGS ON ART IN PROFESSIONAL AND SCHOLARLY JOURNALS, OR MY RESUME OF OVER 20 YEARS? I THINK NOT.

I THINK YOU KNOW YOU CAN NOT SHOW THAT ANY OF US UNTOUCHABLE EIGHT ARE EVEN REMOTELY LEGALLY OBSCENE. SO YOU AND YOUR ILK ARE TRYING TO CREATE THE ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR BY USING THE EXTORTION TACTICS OF THE MAFIA. THE NEA CHAIRMAN, FROHNMAYER, USED THIS ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR, UNDER THE CATCHY PHRASE "CERTAIN POLITICAL REALITY," TO TAKE AWAY THE NEA GRANTS FROM FINLEY, HUGHES, FLECK, AND MILLER. YOUR EXTORTION IS WHAT HAS CREATED THIS POLITICAL REALITY.

THIS EXTORTION IS AN ATTEMPT TO BLACKLIST US UNTOUCHABLE EIGHT AND OTHER ARTISTS WHO HAVE THE NERVE TO DO DIFFICULT ART. THIS SO-CALLED INVESTIGATION IS REALLY THE EXTORTIONIST'S MESSAGE TO GALLERIES THAT, IF THEY BOOK US OR ARTISTS LIKE US, THEY ARE RISKING THE POSSIBILITY OF FUNDING BEING CUT OFF, OF BEING AUDITED, OF BEING CLOSED DOWN BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, OR BEING HASSLED BY THE VICE

SQUAD AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES. ALL OF WHICH HAVE OCCURRED TO THE GALLERIES THAT HAVE BOOKED US UNTOUCHABLE EIGHT.

WHY ARE YOU CLOSING CHANNELS OF EXPRESSION AND OF FUNDING TO ME WITHOUT DUE PROCESS OF LAW? IT IS A POLITICAL AND CULTURAL BLACKLIST UNDER THE COVERS OF OBSCENITY. EXTORTION AND BLACKLISTS ARE AGAINST THE AMERICAN IDEALS AND SPIRIT.

IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY TO ME OR TO ASK ME, COME TO TALK TO ME MAN TO MAN. OTHERWISE, GET YOUR BIG BROTHER FOOT OFF MY BACK.

FRANK MOORE
BERKELEY, CA

Foley Jots a Few Notes in the Colonial Margin

To the Editor:

While Richard Schechner's article "Wayang Kulit in the Colonial Margin" (TDR 34, no. 2 [T126]) had aspects that were insightful and thought provoking, I would like to offer some information that might be usefully considered prior to embracing some of the more specialized forms he advocates (wayang suluh, wayang panca sila, wayang padat) and giving them precedence over wayang kulit jawa. While postmodernism appropriately makes us careful about how and where we attribute authority, facts about these alternative genres may prove them potentially as colonially suspect as the genre he dismisses. Consider:

Wayang suluh and wayang panca sila were creations of the period just after WWII and except for a few puppets and some performances that occurred for a very limited period under the patronage of the government propaganda system they had little impact. For the most part, they exist today only as citations in scholarly articles or conscious reconstructions at the quadrennial "Wayang Festivals" (Pekan Wayang) in Jakarta. In addition to being relatively obscure phenomena, contemporary dalang considered that they were created in response to foreign models, specifically the propagandistic use of performance by Japanese during the occupation of the country. Dalang spoke to me about how the Japanese office of information organized and courted dalang, exempted them from taxes, and pressured them to have the traditional heroes, like the Pandawa brothers, always directed by Batara Surya, and sun god. Dalang naturally found this trying as Japan stripped the country of resources. Dalang who did not toe the line were arrested.

This model of using the arts under the department of information was inherited from the Japanese and modified under Sukarno who was fully aware of practices developed in communist nations. Wayang suluh and panca sila were practiced only by a few dalang; most audiences never saw

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New Times

The Valley's News and Arts Journal

NEWS

YES, BUT IS IT ART?

Nobody watching Frank Moore's performance really cared, which may prove that Phoenix is getting more sophisticated

BY JEROME DU BOIS

Phoenix gave performance artist Frank Moore and his Chero Company a pleasant surprise on October 5 by showing up in record numbers for his controversial "Passions Play" at Gallery X.

Eighty people doesn't sound like a lot, but Moore is a self-described "spastic," palsied from the neck down and unable to speak, and his pieces involve intimate touching and nudity among both the performers and the audience. Though he was an NEA grantee back in 1985, Moore is now on Senator Jesse Helms' blacklist.

"Whenever we told people in Berkeley, or Chicago, or Cleveland, that we were going to Phoenix, they said, 'Watch out, they're all rednecks with guns driving pickup trucks,'" Linda Mac, Moore's wife and interpreter, told Peter Petrisko Jr. of Gallery X.

But what they found instead were people of all ages and backgrounds willing to shed their clothes, rub against each other in a big knot on the floor and pretend they were seaweed, or kittens, or fish.

"To me," Petrisko said, "this turnout confirmed that there's a great hunger out there for alternative art, and for fun. People react to avant-garde art with such heavy seriousness, and I think Frank's work is an antidote for that."

There was certainly humor in abundance during the piece, which began at 7:30 p.m. and did not conclude until 3:30 the following morning. At one point Moore, seated naked in a wheelchair, quasi-lip-synched the Sonny Bono part of "I Got You Babe," while his naked, gaily painted wife performed as Cher. This bearded, jerking man, a big grin on his face, grunted, howled and yelped in time to the tune, his chicken-wing arms flailing to beat the band.

There were some nervous titters, but most people roared laughing. Was he making fun of his own disabilities? Was he trying to make people uncomfortable? Were we supposed to laugh?

These questions seemed irrelevant in the face of this goofiness, what Moore has called "tacky silliness." He has said elsewhere that he uses "nonsense, blatant insults, humor, and lusty playing. . .to break into the altered reality of controlled folly." That night, he seemed the least handicapped person in the room.

The piece began with the crowd sweltering without air conditioning, gathered around the entrance to a long dark hallway. Every few minutes a rotund, bald, naked man, covered completely with red and green and orange paint, would emerge from the far door, blindfold two people, whisper to them, and lead them "into the presence of the Chero Spirit" in the big back room.

After the bald man's first appearance, someone said, "This is really weird. I've never been to anything like this."

Each blindfolded pair was taken to a "nesting place" and asked to remove their shoes. Then they stood single file and waited. While they waited, they could hear two men quietly slapping each other's thighs and mumbling nonsense, like tribal musicians using their bodies as instruments.

Finally a woman approached, took each person by the hands, and led him or her forward. She offered a drink of "somala" (water), saying it would help in the loss of inhibitions. She told the "seeker" that he or she would be led into the presence of the Chero Spirit. "You may remove any articles of clothing except the blindfold, and make any sounds except words." Then she led the seeker behind a screen and placed the seeker, kneeling, with a group of other blindfolded people, around a thick mattress.

Frank Moore and another member of the Chero Company, named Luna, were lying naked on the mattress. Hands explored them all over. Some people disrobed. Hands and legs and heads got all mixed up.

After five hours, everyone had had the chance to touch Frank Moore. That is when he came out and sang, breaking the tension and seriousness that had built up.

Moore then had his alphabet board and head pointer brought forward and attached to him. This is how he communicates. The board fits on his wheelchair the way a toddler's tray fits on a highchair. Then Moore uses his neck, the only muscles he can control, to move the pointer to words and letters printed on the board. His wife interprets and often anticipates his "speeches."

As he expressed his gratitude at the size of the turnout, and told the audience what was coming up next, one marveled at the ability of a man so physically incapacitated to organize, direct and orchestrate so much of his environment. For 20 years, he has done performance, written books, made tapes and films, taught classes, earned two master's degrees and organized two performance groups—in short, he has generated an impressive professional résumé.

After a short intermission, the "Journey to the Planet Lila" began. Some 25 people volunteered to be "heroes," to disrobe and join closely in a circle, surrounded by the clothed "watchers." For about an hour, the watchers watched naked people acting out seaweed, fish, kittens, bears and other flora and fauna. Then the heroes were paired off randomly and told, through instructions taken from a fishbowl, to explore each other's bodies. One of the instructions said, "Explore your partner's entire body, using every part of your body."

Although Moore emphasized that the piece was about play and nonsexual sensuality—what he calls "eroplay"—there were, as one person put it delicately, "signs of sexual arousal." But again Moore had stressed that while "foreplay is eroplay, eroplay is not foreplay."

Such a distinction might have been lost on the vice squad, had it shown up that night. But what was perhaps Phoenix's oddest, most affecting, and certainly most participatory art event ended quietly at 3:30 in the morning, with Frank Moore, the Chero Company, and a few audience members going out to the Waffle House for breakfast. □

photo by L. Mac, courtesy of Gallery X

Performance artist Frank Moore: He seemed the least handicapped person in the room.

FROM THE ASHES

No. 4, Oct. 15-31, 1991 free

PHYSICAL AFFECT

On October 5 Gallery X hosted what was, for myself and perhaps also for the Valley art scene, a ground breaking event: the shamanistic ritual art of Frank Moore's "Passions Play." Moore, who is 99% physically disabled from cerebral palsy and communicates verbally by pointing to letters and words on a board, uses non-sexual physical play (eroplay) to break down and through the barriers of normal, restrictive, alienating reality to create a freeing reality of openness and connectedness.

The evening was a journey in playfully confronting and accepting our physicality as sentient beings and ultimately enjoying it comfortably without guilt or self-conscious embarrassment. This eroplay, directed by Moore, produces a "dream reality" where old rules and mores of physical separateness dissolve and new expressions and interactions of connectedness are created. As Moore has written: "I use child-like playing to get people out of their old personalities, old mindsets and old worlds. By playing, we die and are reborn. The ritual performances are battling the social fragmentation and isolation..." (Shamanistic Art) As the physical world is embraced, gateways to worlds beyond the physical have the possibility of opening up.

Through initiation, word songs, physical play, rites of passage and, finally, trance, one is led through the barriers of seeming-separateness and allowed the flooding realization and insight that we are, in ultimate physical, mental, and spiritual reality, united and bound to each other. As to the exact activities of the evening I will say only this: I was initiated into a new realm, then together with my fellow initiates was addressed by the shaman. Then, I died, evolved from mineral to animal form, went through human rites of passage, then became connected and enwrapped with everyone there. Finally, I was invited to speak personally with the shaman and did so from a place quite different than the place I had begun the evening from.

With true, radiant joy, Moore and his company offered their powerful ritual to anyone who would walk in and partake. Many did so this evening. Moore said ours was the largest gathering ever at this particular type of performance.

It is one thing to say all this that I've written, and quite another thing to play it. Moore leads us in the playing out of it and thus brings us into knowing it, ultimately enabling us to take this experience and knowledge out of the ceremonial space/time and into our entire lives.

Frank Moore's writings are available at Metropophobobia, 128 E. Taylor, Phoenix, 255-0668.

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THE STUDENT NEWSMAGAZINE
of the school of the art institute of chicago
October, 1991

First of Visiting Artists: Frank Moore Makes an Impression

By Paco Rodriguez

Photo by Linda Mac.

Frank Moore at National Poetry Week, San Francisco, 1988. See Visiting Artists Program, September 9.

Frank Moore has cerebral palsy. He says he has been lucky to have the good fortune of being born spastic. Because of what people usually describe as a disability, he attracts attention, and can get away with just about anything. People may stare, gape, or freeze-up when they first set eyes on him. Or, they may say or do any thing for him. "The body is the greatest asset of the performer," he says.

Frank would probably laugh if you were to say that he is confined to his wheelchair. He does not feel confined or disabled. In fact, Frank is so capable, that his work involves orchestrating with people, one on one or in groups, to strip down naked, be blindfolded, and reveal their deepest inhibitions and fascinations. Through movement, speech, and friendly contact, participants in his performances create and inhabit a sort of ritualistic playground that gives new meaning to the idea of communion.

Frank Moore's lecture at the School of the Art Institute on September 9th was the first presentation in the Visiting Artist's Program for the Fall semester. The evening opened with slides of Frank's performances with his collaborative group, the Chero Company. It was accompanied by a soundtrack. The sights and sounds were of joy, celebration, violence, suffering and most characteristically, humor. A more mainstream look at Frank was then presented through a videotape by a Berkeley student news organization. And then Frank (on stage from the moment the auditorium was opened up) was joined by Linda Mac, his wife and collaborator for sixteen years, and Michael, the graphic artist who designs Frank's pamphlets and posters and who is also a member of the Chero Company.

In addition to his facial, physical and vocal expressions, Frank is aided by a contraption he invented when he was seventeen. With a pointer strapped to his forehead, he points to a board on his wheelchair in front of him, on which letters, numbers and words are painted. As Frank taps out his thoughts, Linda reads them to others. "I don't know how long this will go, maybe all night," he says.

Linda and Michael take turns reading aloud Frank's prepared lecture. It is a major work which relates Frank's history, knowledge, and ambitions. Questions were answered throughout the reading. All in all, the evening lasted almost three and a half hours. Throughout that time, the audience had the opportunity to experience Frank's sense of humor and challenging sense of the world. The following day, Frank met with students to discuss their work and held a workshop in the performance space for Lin Hixon's performance class and Freedom Lialios's 4D class.

Frank describes his art as "an underground battle against fragmentation." Fragmentation that produces categories for thinking and action which, ultimately leads to isolation. Until the age of twenty-eight, Frank lived often in a state of isolation. His parents were told that he had no future and was better off left to an institution's care. But they did not agree, and Frank spent his years developing his fantasies, educating himself and often living within this isolation.

At age twenty-eight, things changed. "Basically, I was desperate. I saw my thinking. I was ugly and was not getting what I wanted. Why not try thinking I was beautiful? At first I did not really believe it, but I faked it one-hundred-percent. Eighty percent did not work. Then I forgot I was faking!" Within two weeks, people started to react to this change in him. Something he called his 'new reality.'

And indeed, this new reality is what Frank has built his work on. In his isolation, Frank identified the alienation that persist in our time. Seeing the need for bridging the gap between people, Frank created a new reality for his work. He found that when people take off their clothes they become more relaxed, and reveal their personality. This becomes an opportunity to be vulnerable and to affirm the necessity of it. What eventually developed is a sort of adult playground where nudity not connected with sex ceases to be a source of conflict.

It becomes a space, a "magical context," where people can communicate through childlike curiosity and fascination that has been obliterated by categories of social behavior. Frank named and invented the concept of *eroplay* to describe this way of relating to one another. It is intense physical play which emphasizes enjoyment for its own sake. "*Eroplay* leads to all sorts of arousal-physical, mental, and spiritual." It decreases alienation and, most important, makes people harder to control with fear. Because power is established by way of fear, when people confront their fears, they are less a prisoner of them and the fragmentation, the arbitrary structures of what is permissible. Additionally, in the age of AIDS, *eroplay* is a healthy channel for the physical, and not meant to be a second-rate substitute for sex.

Frank is changing the way people think and live as a result of his work. "We don't know how it happens," Frank says. "It's like physics, we are now just beginning to discover the dynamics of it." When he talks to physicists about what he does, he says they recognize it as a series of actions and reactions that directly relate to physical laws. Frank taps out "The chaos theory and quantum physics." "Two categories that the work fits into," Linda adds. Frank continues, "Like I got this gig (his visit to SAIC) partly because I did a performance eight years ago, that at the time seemed like it was not that great, not to me, but to the people who brought us there." It was Karen Briede who saw the performance at a gallery space in L.A. for *High Performance* Magazine, and because of its impact, organized a performance here last year at *Lower Links*. This, in turn, prompted the SAIC Visiting Artists Program to invite Frank here.

Frank Moore's Workshop: An Exercise in *Eroplay*

BY PACO RODRIGUEZ

Frank Moore gave students the opportunity to experience Frank's "new reality" and his efforts to renew communication between people through the physical in a workshop at the School of the Art Institute on September 10th. Lin Hixon's performance class and Freedom Lialios' 4D class gathered in the performance space for what was to be, according to Frank, an unexpected journey "through death, and rebirth, and evolution. But it is a journey only for crazy people, who think they are heroes. Whose risk is fun. Normal, sane people know different. But who says artists are sane?...For the heroes— you should know that the journey involves dying and nudity, both physical and emotional nudity. And the most scary of all is it involves playing." Frank then gave some instructions for those who felt themselves to be 'heroes' and instructed the 'sane' people to move to the sides of the room.

Five out of the group of roughly sixty people lay down in the middle of the room and were blindfolded by Linda. Michael joined Linda to lightly massage and relax them and then removed their clothing. They were guided into the fetal position. Frank told them to roll slowly to the middle of the room until they could feel flesh all around them. Then he told them to become and to relate to each other as a variety of things: from single-celled organisms to snakes and birds. Throughout the nearly two-hour session, both the participants and the non-participants experienced first-hand, something unique— *eroplay*.

So what was it like for the heroes? Kent Albin explained, "At first I felt like I was in junior-high school gym class on the first day. You know, undressing in the locker room." He was not that worried about the nudity, the heroes were already one step ahead of that. Being in a group, for him, was nice. "It would have been more difficult to be fully clothed and alone."

And for those who did not choose to participate? A student in the performance class said that she had been familiar with Frank's work before, and had seen it on videotape. She was "prepared to do anything except get naked." A student from the 4D class said that Frank's work was described to him only briefly before. "I didn't know what was going to go on. But had I known, I totally would have done it. I thought it was cool."

Typically, the event would have lasted from four to eight hours, Linda explained at the end. And comments from the participants indicated that it would have been nice if it had lasted longer.

When asked if he has any advice for art students, Frank responds, "Well, why are you here?" We are here for the community [SAIC] offers and the opportunity to meet people like him. "That's the main reason," he said. "Because you cannot train artists. You can open them up or close them down, but you cannot train them." His best advice is not to take advice; which is probably the reason his work has entered into the realms it has. The opportunity that his work has created is definitely outside our typical way of relating to one another. But then again, that's not Frank's problem, it's ours.

Frank Moore's Chero Company
Photo by Eric Kroll

Review of Frank Moore's "Passions Play" Performance by Stavros Krysiak

I, STAVROS experienced a unique event, in which I was shamanized by Frank Moore at an event billed as the "Passions Play." I met Frank on GEnie, where I learned that Frank Moore had been investigated by Jesse Helms. I was intrigued with Frank's posts about his Shamanistic Art, and when the opportunity came for me to attend his Passions Play, I couldn't resist. I had to go to find out what a Shaman was and what he did.

On Saturday March 7, I drove to Oakland, to an artist studio located on the waterfront near Jack London Square. I knew at once that I was at the right place when I saw a woman standing in front of a building with a blanket. Frank had instructed us to bring a blanket.

I entered the studio where I could hear a man singing. It was a chant and his voice would move from high tones down to low ones, as he periodically slapped his body to the mantra he was singing. He was naked. His body was covered only with body paint, as were two other painted men, who walked around those of us sitting on the floor. They moved ever so gracefully and ever so slowly.

After about a half hour or more, one of the men came up to people sitting on the floor and ask them if they wished to be prepared to see the shaman, who was in his cave. The cave was behind the curtain in the front of the room. At this point, one couple decided this wasn't for them and they left the room, never to experience the visit to the shaman.

Those that elected to go were taken in pairs. They were first blindfolded. Before they were led to the front of the room, where the entrance to the cave was situated, they were kissed on both cheeks.

We could hear weird sounds coming from the shaman in the cave. A very beautiful naked woman, who was also decorated with body paint came out of the cave. She walked up to the blindfolded participant and gave instructions. They were given a cup containing a magical formula, which tasted mysteriously like water. This, they were told, would release their inhibitions. Then they were taken to the cave.

Some would come back sooner than others. Some came back naked, others fully dressed. One young man hadn't come out yet, when it was my turn. He was one of the first to go in. After drinking the magic formula I was lead into the cave. My instructions were not to speak in words and only in sounds.

When I left the cave I was instructed to go back to my nest and not to reveal what had happened in there. And I will not break that word even for this review.

After I came out, I was asked by an elderly gentleman if it was a positive experience. I gave him a thumbs up. Later, when he came out he gave me the thumbs up sign.

After all had entered the cave and returned to their nests, we prepared to see the shaman. Until this moment I had touched Frank Moore and had written to him on GEnie but I had never seen him.

The Shaman enters and he is placed naked in a wheelchair. Before my very eyes is that great intellect I have come to respect on the GEnie Bulletin Boards.

Then to the tune of music, he made the most God awful animal sounds and grunts. There was a happy smile on his face. I had read other reviews of his work, where they refer to Frank's grotesque body, but I couldn't see the grotesqueness. I saw a very happy person.

Frank was later strapped into the wheelchair. They placed a head band on his head, which had a pointer attached to it. In front of him there was a word board. Frank, who was born with Cerebral Palsy, couldn't control the muscles of 90% of his body. He cannot speak and using the only muscles he can control, his neck muscles, he communicated to us much like he communicates on GEnie, only using the word board instead of a key board. It's his survival in this state, as a happy being, that gives him the power to be a shaman.

We then followed his instructions and prepared to die, so we could be reborn. As I laid on the floor, death visited me and took off my clothes. I was prepared to be reborn. About 40 naked bodies huddled together in the center of the room. It was a cool evening and the body warmth of skin against skin brought warmth to each of us in our bodies and in our hearts. A group of adult men and women were playfully pretending that they were these creatures of evolution. Bodies were rubbing against bodies. Not since I was a naked babe, have I remembered my sense of touch being so fulfilled. My cup of the delight of touch had runneth over. We were single cell beings, multiple cells, seaweed, ants, birds, and other creatures until we evolved to that human form of a child, who was ready for eroplay.

Eroplay is a word coined by Frank Moore. It is a non-sexual but erotic playing. Unlike sex there is no climax. Magically, we were brought to the place where we were ready to be taught eroplay.

We were broken up randomly, mostly into pairs, but some in threesomes. The pairs would be a man and a woman, two men, or two women. At random times we were randomly moved to different partners. We received random instructions to rub your belly, or rub your partner's belly. Rub cheeks. Rub butts. Lay on top of your partner touching their whole body with your whole body. Embrace and rock back and forth. Touch genitals.

Then we watched the great shaman perform the most erotic eroplay with a woman. In all my life I never have seen anything as erotic, as that woman playing with Frank. We were mesmerized, as he played with her. Strobe lights flashed as assistants came out and covered us with Saran Wrap and foil. It was a sight to behold, as we engaged in spontaneous eroplay under a blanket of wrap, which connected us all. By the end of the evening I found myself filled to capacity with the child-like eroplay. It transformed me to another world. I broke taboos I never dreamed of breaking. It felt good. It was a safe place for all of us.

I said good-bye to the shaman at about 3 AM. As I was ready to leave I stopped to watch three men engaged in eroplay. It was beautiful. I felt beautiful, the shaman was beautiful. I exited the magical cave and entered the world of taboos, left with the memory of a magical experience that will be with me forever.

Thus Stavros was shamanized.

The Art of Breaking Taboos

Liberation from the Power Structures of Art

FRANK MOORE

VOX MAGAZINE CONTEMPORARY ART & CULTURE

Vol 3, No 2, Spring 1992

Frank Moore — shaman, performance artist, bon vivant — was a target of the Helms/Rohrabacher censorship forces in Congress because of his non-traditional work. VOX recently invited Moore, a champion for freedom of expression, to express his views on the process of creating art considered sensitive in mainstream society. —Ed.

Sensitive issues? Sensitive to whom? Sensitive within what historical time period? Raising these kinds of questions in an issue focused on "artists who deal with sensitive issues" is in itself raising and dealing with a sensitive issue. By seeing art in terms of dealing with sensitive issues, it places art in the same shallow realm as journalism and fashion. What is a sensitive issue has to do more with the social context within which the art is done than with the art itself. So when the focus is on the social context rather than the art itself, the art gets limited by being tied to political correctness, to fashion, to the thinking by the galleries and other art experts that they have the right to dictate the form, style, content and the subjects of the current art. It would be far better to let future historians analyze the art in terms of sensitive issues and let us artists get back to creating.

From what I have said so far, it might appear I am blasting this very magazine. I am not. What this issue of the magazine does is give me an opportunity to raise a major but hidden concern within my art... the liberation of art from the power structures of art. It is one thing for an artist to deal with, just for an example, AIDS because he personally, artistically is pulled into it by his emotions and his life and quite a different thing when he does a piece on AIDS because galleries are booking AIDS pieces this year. When galleries and theaters impose the subject matter, form and style of the art they present, it is the same as when they would not book any political art in the '40s and '50s.

A few years ago I was in a controversy with a gallery which tried to withdraw its booking of me. The reason that was given was that my art was old fashioned because it used nudity, audience participation, rituals and extended time lengths (5-48 hours), all of which, according to them, went out of fashion with the '60s. Then they somehow heard I had within the piece a nude guy wearing a sign saying "I have AIDS." They said, "Now that is interesting, we are booking that kind of art!" They did not ask why he was in the piece. He was a member of my cast who discovered he had AIDS. "The dying man" role was a part of an intense process of exploring death, for both Carlos and people in general, as a part of a lustful, joyful life. Within the piece, Carlos talked to each person about dying in this context. Later in the piece, as a regular cast member, he erotically played with the audience. AIDS was just one aspect of the death process, which in turn was just one aspect of the alternative human experience which was the performance. Focusing on Carlos as an "AIDS victim" obscures him, cheapens him, objectifies him, fragments him away from humanity.

This is also true when we focus on a work of art or an artist in terms of objectifying labels such as gay, woman, black, disabled, etc. I have cerebral palsy, am in a wheelchair, move and sound uniquely. Any art I do which uses my body just has to have an aspect of the disabled in it. But disability has never been the central theme of my work. However, disability has been a sensitive issue within the cultural frame, to various degrees, in the 20+ years that I have been performing.

When I was doing the tacky, sexy, gross cabaret show, *The Outrageous Beauty Revue*, in the late '70s, I just happened to have in the cast of 30, three disabled guys as well as myself. Some in the audience were upset because they

Lee Kay, *Bubblehead Portrait: Frank Moore #9, Black and white photograph, 1991*

Eric Kroll

Frank Moore's Chero Company, *Wrapping/Rocking, NYC, 1989*

Eric Kroll

Frank Moore's Chero Company, *Wrapping/Rocking, NYC, 1989*

thought we were "normal" actors making fun of "crips." It did not help when they figured out that we were real crips. They then assumed that somebody was exploiting us poor souls. When they discovered that we were the artists who had created the acts, they then accused us of self-exploitation. This is similar to when feminists tell women artists such as Annie Sprinkle and Karen Finley that they shouldn't use their own nude bodies in their art. I ran into this again after I did a shamanistic erotic ritual in Philadelphia. At the end of the piece, a guy accused me of using a cheap tactic of shock by using my body. If this criticism were valid, it would deny me the use of my own body. Obviously the physical disability aspect of my reality, although it is on the fringe of my art focus, gives me a powerful tool to get to my true focus,that of human liberation.

When I started my performance journey in the early '70s, I was not interested in creating literary drama pictures, either fiction or based on real events. I wanted to create alternative realities which could be experienced and in which the normal rules and taboos do not apply. To create these awake dreams, I saw I had to break the traditional barriers between audience and performers, had to break the dramatic time structure (both the linear flow and the real time length) which has been held on to from the ancient Greeks down to modern movies and TV. I was focused on creating within the interpersonal level, both within performances and in working with groups of performers. I started doing street pieces, secret private pieces with one other person, public rituals which lasted from 5 to 48 hours. I also used low cost technologies and tactics which were in reach of everyone, but which were frowned upon by the art experts because of the lack of a certain level of professional quality. The concern about professional quality has kept the creation of "real" or "fine art" in the hands of an art elite.

All of this breaks the taboos concerning form, time, and style. But these taboos are in reality the main reason why I have had problems doing this art in the art world for most of my career. This was not as true when I started out. One reason for this was that instead of performing in galleries and theaters, I performed in rented dance halls, school gyms, rock clubs, and my own studios. But the main reason why I had an easier time doing my art was that I was working within a different, more open cultural and artistic environment than the current one. My work was in the context of art done by Anna Halprin, The Living Theatre, the performance group of Richard Schechner, Grotowski, and of course Artaud. I was working within an artistic context which was using the breaking of taboos within the traditional time/style format, breaking them to create a subversive alternative reality to the normal reality of fragmentation and isolation. Within this cultural and artistic environment, what I did was less sensitive, and hence less subversive.

Obviously the physical disability aspect of my reality, although it is on the fringe of my art focus, gives me a powerful tool to get to my true focus, that of human liberation.

But what I did became much more sensitive and subversive because of the artistic environment of performance in the late '70s, shifting into personal monologues about the normal reality instead of creating an alternative experience of reality, shifting back onto the theatrical stage. Directors of galleries and theaters started telling me they were not booking me at their spaces because they are personally afraid of the audience participation, the extended time, and/or the trance experience. I always thought this is a valid honest reason for not booking me. These directors often voted for my work when they were on committees for venues other than their own.

But some galleries step over the line into looking at both the artist and the art as a packaged commodity by telling the artist what changes have to be made in the art in form, style, content, subject and time to make the art suitable for the gallery. This assumes the artist has a choice or the power to mold the art.

This is a basic misunderstanding of the process of creating art. As a person, I have always needed to break out of personal and physical isolation. To do this, I need to bring other people into an altered reality to play in an expanded/extended sexuality. All the forms and contents of the art flow uncontrolled from this depth of need. I am sure this is true of all good artists who are drawn into taboo areas. We do not see what we do as dealing with sensitive issues but as things we must do. ✖

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THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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By Richard Nilsen
The Arizona Republic

And Gallery X is bringing us the controversial performance artist Frank Moore and his Chero Company. Vilified by the political right and targeted, along with Annie Sprinkle and Karen Finley, by North Carolina's Republican Sen. Jesse Helms, Moore's five-hour performance will involve nudity, shamanistic ritual and an opportunity for audience participation. Moore, who suffers from cerebral palsy and is quadriplegic, has not received a government grant since 1985. Phoenix doesn't often play host to the cutting edge, but thanks to Gallery X we can see for ourselves and make up our own minds.

Your fall guide to arts, entertainment in the Valley

Passions Play A five-hour performance piece by Frank Moore and his Chero Company, 7:30 p.m. Oct. 5 at Gallery X, 800 W. Madison.

AN OPEN LETTER TO SEN. JESSE HELMS

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. I HAVE READ IN the l.a. times AND the village voice THAT YOU HAVE THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE INVESTIGATING KAREN FINLEY, JOHANNA WENT, CHERI GAULKE, AND MYSELF. WHY ARE YOU GOING BEHIND OUR BACKS? WHY ARN'T YOU TALKING DIRECTLY TO US ARTISTS, INSTEAD OF HAVING THE G.A.O., AT THE TAXPAYERS' EXPENSE, GOING TO THE GALLERIES AND THE THEATERS WE HAVE PERFORMED IN TO ASK VEILED QUESTIONS ABOUT US?

HERE I AM. LET'S TALK, MAN TO MAN. IT IS THE AMERICAN WAY. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ME? YOU HAD MY ADDRESS BECAUSE I SENT YOU MY ARTICLE ABOUT HOW I THINK WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS PATENTLY OFFENSIVE TO THE BILL OF RIGHTS. AFTER ALL, IT IS THE AMERICAN WAY TO DIRECTLY CONFRONT YOUR OPPONENT, GIVING HIM A CHANCE TO ANSWER, AND GIVING THE PEOPLE A DIALOG. BUT YOU DID NOT SEND ME A LETTER. YOU SENT THE G.A.O..

THIS IS NOT AN INVESTIGATION FOR INFORMATION. IT IS AN INVESTIGATION FOR EXTORTION. IT IS PART OF THE CAMPAIGN TO SMEAR US FOUR ARTISTS--AS WELL AS HOLLY HUGHES, TIM MILLER, ANNIE SPRINKLE, AND JOHN FLECK--AS UNTOUCHABLE, UNFUNDABLE, UNBOOKABLE. THE PAINT THAT IS USED TO SMEAR IS THAT OF "OBSCENE ARTISTS." ARE YOU TRYING TO FIND OUT WHETHER OR NOT OUR WORK FALLS INTO THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF OBSCENE? HAVE YOU SEEN MY PERFORMANCES OR EVEN TALKED TO ANYONE WHO HAS? HAVE YOU READ MY WRITINGS ON ART IN PROFESSIONAL AND SCHOLARLY JOURNALS, OR MY RESUME OF OVER 20 YEARS? I THINK NOT.

I THINK YOU KNOW YOU CAN NOT SHOW THAT ANY OF US UNTOUCHABLE EIGHT ARE EVEN REMOTELY LEGALLY OBSCENE. SO YOU AND YOUR ILK ARE TRYING TO CREATE THE ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR BY USING THE EXTORTION TACTICS OF THE MAFIA. THE N.E.A. CHAIRMAN, FROHNMAYER, USED THIS ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR, UNDER THE CATCHY PHRASE "CERTAIN POLITICAL REALITY," TO TAKE AWAY THE N.E.A. GRANTS FROM FINLEY, HUGHES, FLECK, AND MILLER. YOUR EXTORTION IS WHAT HAS CREATED THIS POLITICAL REALITY.

THIS EXTORTION IS AN ATTEMPT TO BLACKLIST US UNTOUCHABLE EIGHT AND OTHER ARTISTS WHO HAVE THE NERVE TO DO DIFFICULT ART. THIS SO-CALLED INVESTIGATION IS REALLY THE EXTORTIONIST'S MESSAGE TO GALLERIES THAT, IF THEY BOOK US OR ARTISTS LIKE US, THEY ARE RISKING THE POSSIBILITY OF FUNDING BEING CUT OFF, OF BEING AUDITED, OF BEING CLOSED DOWN BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, OF BEING HASSLED BY THE VICE SQUAD AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES. ALL OF WHICH HAS OCCURRED TO THE GALLERIES THAT HAVE BOOKED US UNTOUCHABLE EIGHT.

WHY ARE YOU CLOSING CHANNELS OF EXPRESSION AND OF FUNDING TO ME WITHOUT DUE PROCESS OF LAW? IT IS A POLITICAL AND CULTURAL BLACKLIST UNDER THE COVERS OF OBSCENITY. EXTORTION AND BLACKLISTS ARE AGAINST THE AMERICAN IDEALS AND SPIRIT.

IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY TO ME OR TO ASK ME, COME TO TALK TO ME MAN TO MAN. OTHERWISE, GET YOUR BIG BROTHER FOOT OFF MY BACK.

IN FREEDOM,
FRANK MOORE

HEAVEN BONE
Poetry • Fiction • Reviews

Issue #9
Winter/Spring 1991–'92

Cherotic Magic by Frank Moore, 107 pages. S/R Press (P.O. Box 60327, Palo Alto, CA 94306),1990. $15.00

Frank Moore is a west coast performing artist and shamanic teacher. The down-to-earth and highly erotic art which is brought to life by his "Chero Company" explores the boundaries of erotic play and spiritual rapture, surreal and funny scenarios that jar and skew moral and social structures, attempting new forms of relationship.

Cherotic Magic is a sort of shamanic treatise which indeed defines a new form of relationship between people and their natural world. "The Chero Apprenticeship," a structured, ritualized relationship between Frank and his disciples, is the key to the yearning heart's need to play and be rewarded by playing with a touch of enlightenment, a deeper sense of peace and electric union with the well-spring of cosmic energy that is our source.

If this type of teacher/disciple relationship unnerves you, I suppose you're not alone—Bhagwan Shree Rashneesh devotees adored *their* erotic shaman and were let down, the Vajra Regent Osel Tendzin refused to believe he had AIDS and infected some of his Tantric students—and I suppose most spiritual and hyper-creative people who sense the nature of their creative process as a path toward freedom want to commune with others of the same proclivity, a "Sangha" or community—but the fact remains that a good many spiritually sincere individuals still cannot make the kind of committment that is required by such forms of ritual apprenticeship and group surrender. There are too many reasons why this year is not quite the right year to go on that meditation retreat, or start that raw juice program, or finally tell that special person you really love them. Repressions abound and too much of life is tainted by dull awareness.

Regardless of this huge weight of historical resistance, the "Chi" (or "physical source of energy in the body") and the erotic impulse toward communion with other people and with nature herself is very much alive in all of us on this dizzy planet and it seems to be a wonderful opportunity when someone is willing to help us unlock our integrative potentials. Frank Moore has been disabled by Cerebral Palsy since birth and has made his condition an asset to the point where his life stands as an example of dynamic magic in action and all the rules of intuitive discrimination must apply to those seriously considering shamanic apprenticeship: If it works for you, it's good and don't let anybody shake your confidence in your chosen path or in your teacher.

Frank Moore's path is the cultivation of "Eroplay." The nature of Eroplay is to heal and rebalance all the energy centers of the body through touch and spontaneous group "bodyplay." The philosophy behind this playing hold that the spiritual and the physical are not at opposition to one another, they are inherently in harmony—in fact, it is the sexual aspects of our nature that may hold the brightest key to our living fully potentialized. When the physical energy centers are in balance, the human body radiates a harmonic force that is dynamicly creative. The shamanic leader or teacher then engages in a ritualized relationship with these released, energized beings and helps them cultivate the process of deepening and opening the radiant mind.

Much of *Cherotic Magic* is tantric yoga without the Buddhist iconography—the surreal and erotic illustrations by Michael LaBash (see his work elsewhere in this issue) serve as the "tankas" or sacred visual icons of this newly emerging practice lineage. With an ideological heritage based in the Tao and Jerzy Grotowsky, the EST Training and Tibetan and Egyptian mythologies, the work this book represents is a charged synthesis of creative spiritual techniques which hope to inspire a magical art and an artist who is magician/lover/warrior:

> "Our tools are magic, our bodies, taboos and dreams."
>
> "The basic secret of magic is to like life, to love life, to throw yourself into life so completely, so extensically that you lose yourself as a source in the individualistic sense."

Those wishing to contact Frank Moore for more information on his work with the "Chero Company" or the "Shamanic Apprenticeship" can write to him at P.O. Box 11445, Berkeley, CA. 94701-2445.

KAREN FINELY SELLS OUT!

I remember when Karen Finley had integrity. You should have been there—I saw her in her glory days, in New York, way back in '87 when she was cool. Those shows are legendary. They were exhilarating! Challenging! Daring! Disgusting! When she brought out all the different cans of sickening food from the market, the crowd went wild. Back then just about all the foods that she inserted into her orifices or smeared over her naked body were mushy, runny and stomach-turning. Yams. Summer Squash. Beets. Real radical, sickening stuff. Oh sure, there was the occasional foray into the mainstream, like the "Melted Ice Cream Sandwiches" routine. But, in our youthful innocence, how were we to know that this gesture was betraying a pop sensibility, and was a harbinger of things to come? By and large the main thrust of her shows then consisted of bold, uncompromising grossness.

In '88, Karen went through a transitional period. Gone were the yams, and in their place were beaten eggs, glitter and plastic grass from easter baskets. Some fans had reservations about the glitter. They wondered aloud, "Is this *ART*, or merely show-biz?" But those feelings came from only the most critical and extreme of us. After all, it was still a repulsive spectacle. I mean, pouring cold eggs all over yourself? YECCCCH!

Around this time, things started to get crazy. Members of the audience had to be restrained from clamoring onstage while she was performing and snatching discarded clothing or little pieces of food as momentos. Crowds went wild at the show's end, chanting her name until they were hoarse, long after Karen had left the auditorium. We embraced her vision of the world, and loved her completely. Ah, what a time it was! It was a way out, groovy, wacky scene. Best of all, it was *ours*; *we* were the future—and we thought it would last forever!

But soon after things started to go sour. First a feature in Newsweek. She became the darling of the New York high society art world. Then Broadway. Then the film offers multiplied: she made her first movie, and then another. She sang on a Sinead O' Connor record. Soon the older fans were deserting her in droves. How dare she hob nob with such vermin, they reasoned; she belongs in the underground! How can she desert us when we scammed in to her shows all those years! She's nothing but a phony, nouveau riche art poseur!

But the final indignation was yet to come. We all got a preview of the new Karen Finley at the recent shows at UCLA's Wadsworth Theatre. The performances exposed her true cunning; the real extent of her ambition. Imagine the crushing disappointment that descended upon all of us, the die hard faithful, when we saw...

Chocolate.

Melted chocolate.

A melted bittersweet chocolate heart from the finest confectioner in town. And candy valentine hearts. The ultimate sell-out. I mean, how could you make your act any more palatable than by smearing imported belgian chocolate all over your nude body, and then sprinkling red hots over the sticky sweet goo? Everybody in the world loves chocolate. What a cynical, calculated career move. After the chocolate and hearts, to broaden her audience she wooed the Baby-Boomers by attaching bean sprouts to herself. And *then*, just to make sure that she got a good review, at one point in the performance she threw hard candy out into the audience—a flagrant bribe. It was a disgraceful excersise in crass commercialism.

Gone is the vegetable matter tangled in her pubic hair. Ditto with the eggs baking on her skin under the hot lights. Now we have performance art that a mother could love.

Fans all over the world are asking: Karen Finley, *WHAT HAPPENED?* Why did you *SELL OUT??*

photo by Ken Jennings

FRANK MOORE

What are the grossest things you've done on stage or that people consider gross?

Linda Mac (for Frank Moore): The Meat Act? Okay, Frank says the Meat Act. Frank is in a wheelchair and he doesn't talk like this, he talks [muffled sounds from Frank] like that. For the Meat Act he's singing a song by Black Sabbath called "Hand of Doom." Right before that song when he was singing another song, two of the cast people, a male and a female, were doing an erotic dance nude on stage in a strobe light where they cover each other in glitter, chocolate and whipped cream. For this act they're standing there covered in those things and the female is whipping the male with a black leather whip. Then the lights are flashing and the strobe lights go on and I come out as a henchwoman with hardly any clothes on. I have these two monsters with me that are on all fours, also nude, and they have blood dripping from them. We go into the audience and we stalk our victims. The song's a seven-minute song so we cruise the audience for several minutes, looking at different people, considering them as possible victims. Then we finally reach our victim and I point the person out and the monsters abduct the person, screaming and kicking, "Help! Help! Help!" and bringing them up to the stage.

And this is not a "planted" person, it's an actual, unsuspecting person?

The victim is planted. In fact, Jack Marquette was our victim the last time we were in L.A. The victim is packed with chitlins and ketchup and minestrone soup and chicken skins and whatever else we come up with, but you don't see that. They're wearing loosefitting clothes. When the monsters put the victim up on the stage in the strobe light they rip the victim apart; they rip the victim's clothing off and then eat their innards. That goes on for several minutes, then the victim dies. The smell is really gross, a very gross smell.

What smell is that?

Well, the smell of all this food that has been sitting against that body for hours while that person's been standing in the audience waiting. Like chitlins and chicken skins and all that. So the victim dies but toward the end of the song I reach down and take the victim's hand and the victim is resurrected. Then all of us stand side-by-side and the lights come up and we end the show by singing a Sonny & Cher song called "Somebody." That's it. Frank, are you saying something? [translates] "I H-A-, I have, E-A-, eaten, L-I-, live worms." That's part of a show that we did in the 70s, "The Outrageous Stevie Review" Frank ate live worms.

How did that taste?

He said it didn't taste bad at all; it was pretty tasteless. "IN, In fact, I-T, it, W-A, was, M-, much better than another part of the show featured our hostess, our emcee, a really very tackily dressed, kind of Fredericks of Hollywood style, with a several-feet high wig with flashing Christmas lights in it. One of the things that she did was make up a little concoction with her blender. She would call it a "Meal In A Parfait Dish." She'd put the dessert at the bottom of the dish, which was candy corn, and she'd build up from there with canned beets and instant mashed potatoes and blended hot dogs. Frank said that was a lot grosser than the live worms.

What does one do after there's no more shock value, no grossness?

"I have not reached that point yet." He said he'll tell you when he does.

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photograph of Frank Moore and Linda Mac by Annie Sprinkle

FRANK MOORE

the *Art* of a Shaman

written by Jerry Snider

The sign hanging above the performance space makes it clear that this is not your typical theatrical experience; it reads: "Warning! Enter at your own risk. This piece may be threatening to your everyday reality."

Those who have come to experience the performance gather in the lobby. Lights are low as the scent of incense wafts through the room. A sense of anticipation is heightened by silence. Many of the attendees will wait up to two hours to be ushered inside by a cast member whose nude body is ritually decorated with paint, but no one is in any hurry. They have come prepared to spend the night if necessary, blankets and pillows in hand, to participate in a performance by master reality bender Frank Moore. If the performance is a success, they will enter a bizarre dreamscape of their own imaginations. And though they may be enchanted, they will not be entertained. Frank Moore does not entertain. Unable to walk, talk, and with only spastic control of his movements, Moore demands more of his "audience" than passive attention; he requires their involvement—their willingness and daring to break through their own personal barriers of isolation the way he has broken through his.

When Frank Moore was born with cerebral palsy, doctors advised his parents that he would be mentally retarded, and that it would be best to institutionalize their son. They did not. Instead, they chose to raise their child at home. Their decision required a passionate commitment, and that commitment drew others who wanted to help and dared to hope that there might be possibilities for the boy the doctors had not foreseen.

Surrounded by love and generosity, Moore learned early a lesson that many never do; he learned to trust, and that trust opened interior doorways that led to a freedom his body could never experience. Imprisoned within his body, Moore found liberation in the spirit.

Moore demands more of his "audience" than passive attention; he requires their involvement—their willingness and daring to break through their own personal barriers of isolation the way he has broken through his.

Keenly intelligent, but unable to communicate with the outside world, the boy watched from his isolation. And what he saw was theater, the grand performance of life. Like the people who now wait in silence for extended periods to experience his performance, Moore learned patience, the kind of patience it takes to find the stillness of the spirit and the liberation of vulnerability. To a large degree, that is what a Frank Moore performance is about, and those who accept his gift and are touched by it see Moore as he sees himself—not as disabled, but enabled.

This attitude, though rare in our culture, is not new. It has a rich history in indigenous tribal cultures that saw magic not as a cheap illusion, but as a powerful force issuing from veiled realities that few could see and fewer still enter. Those who could became guides for the rest. Though few performers realize it, this is their heritage; it is also Frank Moore's. He understands that theater is one of the few public gateways left to the mythic realms where all things are possible and limitations melt away. It is this understanding of theater's magical roots that allows a man who cannot speak and who can barely move to command the attention of an audience and make the unlikely claim that he has the "perfect body for a performance artist."

© Eric Kroll

Forced to communicate his thoughts by painstakingly tapping out individual letters of the alphabet on a letterboard via a pole strapped to his head, Moore's eloquence belies the awkward technology that allows its expression: "I was born into the long tradition of the deformed shaman, the wounded healer, the blind prophet, and the club-footed 'idiot' court jester," says Moore. "Primitive tribes believed that if a cripple could survive childhood, he belonged to the spiritual world. As a symbol of the deformed medicine man, I am a medium to other dimensions. My body and attitudes toward life break taboos and change things."

Moore's performances are meant to rattle. Combining the roles of shaman and avant-garde artist, he is doubly aware that opening vistas to alternative realities usually requires a jolt, and the artist provides that jolt in various ways. To begin with, there is the extended vigil in the lobby, an atmosphere Moore continues by "spending the first hour boring people, usually by asking what each person does, how did he hear about the performance, etc." He drives up to each person in his wheelchair and taps out his questions slowly on his letterboard. Says Moore, "Talking to this strange person in this strange way is interesting as a confrontation. Listening to the trivial chatter of a disabled man in this painfully slow way creates an active boredom in a room—a slow, increasing shock that makes people who want quick-paced, high-energy entertainment suddenly bolt out of the door."

As unnerving as it may be, boredom is only the beginning of a theatrical shock therapy that is meant to induct Moore's "apprentices" into a trance-like state. Like a pied piper leading his followers farther and farther from everyday reality, Moore's magical techniques include ritual, nudity, erotic physical encounters, and just plain silliness.

For some, Moore's idiosyncratic shamanistic performance is an emotionally liberating exploration of death and rebirth; for others, it is a disturbing spectacle of self-exploitation, an excuse for a cripple to exercise his overactive libido. (One recurring criticism of his work is that it is more therapy than art). But those who see only shock for shock's sake in Moore's strange, erotic performances fail to realize his motive, which is a kind of spiritual warfare, an attack on society's encrusted taboos to free the energy trapped inside.

Of course, taboo busting is not without its peril. Moore's "art for subverting reality" requires a cer-

tain adventurousness of spirit—a quality seldom appreciated by government bureaucracies. As a result, Moore has landed on Jesse Helm's "hit list," which means that performance spaces that receive NEA grants are likely to have them yanked if they underwrite the wheelchair-bound showman shaman.

Moore refuses to be intimidated: "When performance is limited in time and space for acceptability, it stops being performance. Art should not be a show. By simply following society and recording its trends, the artist becomes linked to a power system and becomes trapped in a basic conflict of interest, when her true job is to act as a surrogate who travels into the reality of dreams, myths, and universal truths in order to bring new dreams, myths, and visions to society. The more restrictive society is, the more it needs this kind of dream art. Just as an individual needs to dream or go insane, so does the culture.

"The two areas of creativity—theater and religion—that traditionally were the source of magic and inspiration, long ago moved to entertainment and politics. This void gave birth to psychology and performance art which both developed at about the same time. Both are involved in spiritual healing by digging into the hidden mysteries of life.

"The difference between theater and performance art is that, in regular theater, you can climb up onto the altar of the stage, and you don't have to interact with your audience. This also happened in religion, and look what happened: When the priests climbed up to the altar, not only did they divide themselves from the people, but also from the vital magic.

"What I create in my performance is a reality, not an illusion, even if I have to use illusions to get to this reality. I am a channel through which a whole host of factors actively mix together, creating a community change, a mythic over-reality, a group living poem. I do not perform to tell stories, to paint pictures for others to look at, or to reveal something about myself, and certainly not for fame. It was simply the best way to create the intimate community that I needed and thought society needed as an alternative to personal isolation."

The "intimate community" that Moore speaks of is an integral part of his work. Even in traditional theater, there exists a subtle group energy that unites, for the period of the performance, the individual members of the audience into a small community sharing the same emotional experience. But while most performers create this magic by drawing the audience's emotions into the performance, Moore's physical limitations force a different, more intimate, approach. Moore creates his intimate community through close, personal contact, allowing the audience to get in touch with their own isolation by exploring the obvious source of the artist's isolation—his body. By creating the proper atmosphere and frame of reference for this exploration, Moore channels the emotional response of the audience from separate individuals into an organic whole. His body acts to unite the audience, overcoming both his own and his audience's isolation.

There is no stage, nor, strictly speaking, an audi-

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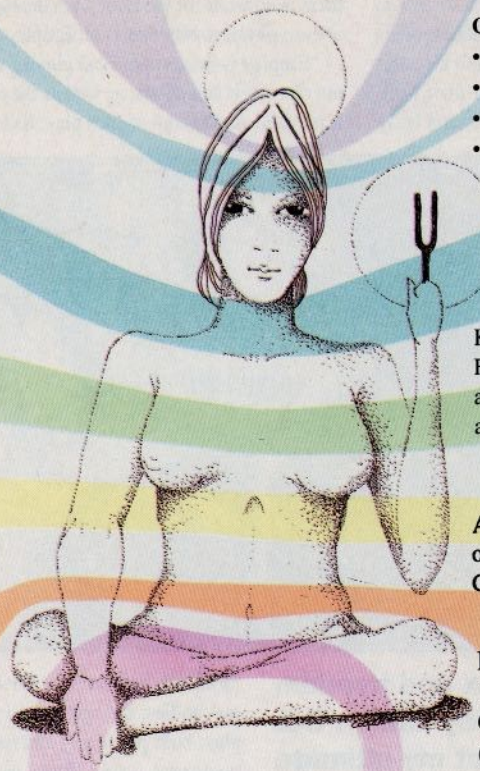

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ence. The performance is a gateway the audience must actively enter rather than simply being carried through. "I do not see the performance as my own," he says. "I recognize I am only one factor in creating the altered reality of performance." Even so, Moore remains the focus, and despite the playfulness of his work, he is serious about his obligation to the audience. "I have to take responsibility for their well-being. I cannot take them out on a limb and leave them there."

To create the magic of his "intimate community," Moore uses his own vulnerability as a tool for the audience to tap into theirs. Part of this process involves dividing his performance into two parts. To prepare the audience for the public performance, they participate in private sub-rituals in which pairs of performance-goers are ushered into the artist's "cave." Moore has utilized the metaphor of the cave throughout his career as a symbol of a sacred place free from outside taboos and limitations. These private encounter sessions are not referred to in the public performance piece that follows. Rather, the trance-like atmosphere created in the intimacy of the "cave" carries out into the larger performance. The energy that bonds the audience individually with the artist in the cave gives them a common bond with each other in the public performance. Sworn to secrecy in the cave, that bond retains a mysterious, sacred quality. Says Moore, "The purpose of the private piece is to provide a sacred freedom for the participants to break free from their own isolation."

© Linda Mac

"I cannot imagine more important issues than sex and freedom symbolized by nudity. But these are not my ultimate focus; sex and nudity are powerful tools to reach the intimate community."

Within the cave, blindfolded participants have their hands placed on Moore and are told to do whatever they want, but not to reveal what happens in the room. Perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of Moore's work, it is also one of the most important. According to Moore, "When the secret sub-ritual fails to reach the taboo-breaking intensity, the public ritual falls flat.

"There has always been pressure to change the content and focus of the work. People always say they like the work because it is strong, but that I should get over my obsession with sex and nudity and get on to more important issues. What they like about the work, the strength, comes from being committed to a single vision, no matter what the current trends and fashions are. I have always used nudity and physical acts in my work, which most people would call sexual. I combine this with breaking time/space taboos, my unique body, and other tools to enter an awakened dream, but the 'sexual' content of my work grabs most of the attention.

"One of the things that undermines my work is the English language. Our minds need labels, and there is no word for the force I am dealing with, an intense physical play that I call Eroplay.

"Eroplay is intense physical playing and touching of oneself and others, as well as the energy that is released as the result of such play. Kids play very physically both with their own and others' bodies; they get turned on by this play, both physically and mentally, in nonsexual ways. When we grow to adulthood, eroplay becomes linked to sex, maybe to assure procreation. But there may be different results when eroplay is connected to the sexual orgasm. What stops most people from physically eroplaying without connecting it to sex, without sexual undercurrents or expectations, is the inability to see where eroplay ends and sex begins. The difference between foreplay and pure eroplay is one of intent; physically there is no difference. In sex, however, there is a point where foreplay (eroplay) ceases to satisfy and energy builds to be released in the sex act, which is a clear and broad dividing line between the turn-on of eroplay and sex.

"Eroplay is safe because it has no physical intercourse, but it is not an avoidance like celibacy. Eroplay connects you more with your own body and with other people. It decreases isolation and alienation and increases self-trust and trusting of others. It makes you harder to be controlled. We may need a certain amount of straight eroplay, not connected to or leading to sex, to be healthy.

"I cannot imagine more important issues than sex and freedom symbolized by nudity. But these are not my ultimate focus; sex and nudity are powerful tools to reach the intimate community. By limiting the tools of art, art itself is limited.

"The problem with our modern frame of art reality is its preoccupation with what is seen. What we usually think of as works of art are aftermaths of art. The fundamental dynamic of art is in the doing. The doing of art and having other people see the artwork are two separate dynamics, events, rituals. The seeing of the art is what the viewer or the listener does in her head. The doing of art is the ritual of creation, is what the artist does. In reality, this ritual has more to do with the act of doing than the act of creation. When a child first draws crazy lines on the wall, he is not trying to create something or express himself or show you something... but to do something for some effective purpose that our linear logic cannot grasp. The crazy person does his insane rituals, not to express himself, but to keep the sky from falling or to make pain go away. And it works. The sky does not fall down. Maybe it is because of the rituals of the insane.

"The very act of doing changes the whole universe. This is a key principle of magic. By doing a ritual or by speaking a spell, you can effect change. Painting a picture, doing a dance, writing a poem, any act of art can be a magical ritual, the doing of which has nonlinear effects. Most acts of creation are private rituals done in personal caves.

"The ancient cave artists operated in this magical way. Their art was not for looking at. This is why they did their rituals and paintings in very dangerous, inaccessible, pitch-black bowels of caves. The purpose of these paintings and rituals was to magically effect change in the world (the past, the present, and the future, as well as the life after death...) or to communicate with the universal powers. The act of doing this magical art released an energy, some of which remained within these caves, making them 'holy' or 'magical' sites. The walls of a lot of these caves have layers upon layers of magical drawings done by different tribes over the time spans of hundreds or thousands of years. These tribes may have been drawn to these dangerously inaccessible caves by this special energy, released through the doing of art, stored in the caves, radiating out of the caves, and recharged by every new act of magic art done within the cave.

"Private performance is a way to regain the magical power of doing art. Doodling or singing in the shower are other private performances that are too silly, too intense, too vulnerable to be expressed in public. But I believe this may be where real art begins.

"Our society is at a fork in its growth; it can go deeper into high-tech impersonal isolation, or it can rediscover the magic that happens when humans actively and directly link up with one another. Art needs to take a pathbreaker role. The kind of art I am committed to is art as a battle, an underground war against fragmentation. Artists of this breed need to be warriors who are willing to go into the areas of taboo, willing to push beyond where it is comfortable and safe to explore and build a larger zone of safeness.

"An 'art expert' told me that my work was not art

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have been people who have been resuscitated, so something is there. In that eight minutes, what should you prepare for? My meditation practices are on the breath, so what happens after I stop breathing?

I think the process of dying takes over, whatever you think, and goes on automatic. What you think may be harmonious with what happens, but what happens is going to happen in any case. Sometimes I think that you enter open space and become open space.

In the last moment you don't want to be pissed off, even if there's no rebirth. So it's a good idea to get into the frequency of some kind of meditative practice in case there's no afterlife. It prepares you for whatever situation. "Do not go gently into that good night, rage, rage against the dying of the light." You know that poem? It seems the worst advice possible.

Do you think that the fear of death could be the fear of non-existence?

Allen Ginsberg: Well, no, that wouldn't be so bad. It would be the fear of existing again, in another life. Popping up again, like pop goes the weasel, and being stuck with whatever hard-on you started out with. You could have an obsession and think, oh, I should have cut that out long ago! I should have stopped lusting after pretty boys long ago! You're born into a universe with nothing but pretty boys, and you get stuck there for another 100 years until you realize, uh oh, you're going to die. I'm not quite up to that adventure yet. ●

David Brown is the author of Brainchild *(Falcon Press, 1988), and Rebecca McClen is an award-winning poet and freelance journalist.*

Frank Moore

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because it doesn't address 'the concerns which are part of the current art dialogue.' But galleries and the people who think what is in galleries is the full range of art need the artists, not the reverse. The magic of private performance is needed to expand the narrow, shallow river of 'the current art dialogue.'

"I was lucky because I was never under pressure to be good at anything, to make money, to be polished—and the other distractions that modern artists have to, or think they have to, deal with. I could focus on having fun, on going into taboo areas where magical change can be evoked. I am also fortunate because my body gives me a tool that other artists spend years to create. Artists who don't have the built-in advantages and shields that I have need to resist the real world and be more sneaky to avoid being seduced by the business and politics of art. I want to encourage artists, who have not been so blessed with bodies that mark them as misfits, to aspire to be misfits anyway, to do misfit art. Their road is definitely harder than my road, but that's life." ●

Frank Moore offers an intensive shamanistic training based on his book, Cherotic Magic. *For more information, write to: Frank Moore, P.O. Box 11445, Berkeley, CA 94701-2445. Also available is a free catalog of Moore's written, audio, and video works.*

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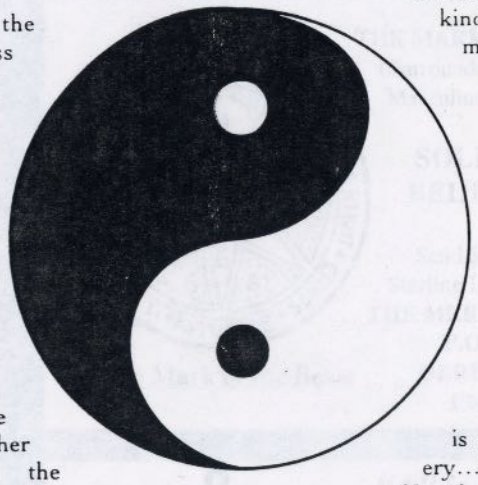
POST PORN MODERNIST

annie sprinkle

✦ annie sprinkle invited us to her *post porn modernist* one-person show last saturday. i saw it years ago when she did it at a n.y.c. strip theatre...and i wrote a review of it which was published in *art papers*. in the review, i pretended i was just someone who had come to the show (in reality we were staying at her place, watched her rehearse the last ritual, and michael painted her vibrator). i could not do that now because she has put me into the show for my "famous tongue"...and listed me in the program credits as one of her performance teachers...which is very flattering because she is the best performance artist i have seen and her show is the best i have been to. i said this in the old review. but the ritual that is this show has become much deeper, much more human. annie very quickly shattered the limitations of a stage show, very quickly created an intimate community from all the people in the space. it is the community that really does the ritual, using annie's life as the pathway. the ritual never stops, not even during the "intermission" (annie stays on stage for people to have their picture taken with her bare breasts on their heads...at $10 a pop). the show's last section, a very magically powerful ritual, did not end, annie did not leave the stage, until way after the last audience member had left (i, as a performer, watched each person somehow decide it was time to go).

annie's messages are clear in the show...sex and the body are good...people do not have to be victims...and the more happiness and pleasure you have, the more happiness and pleasure you are creating in/for the world.



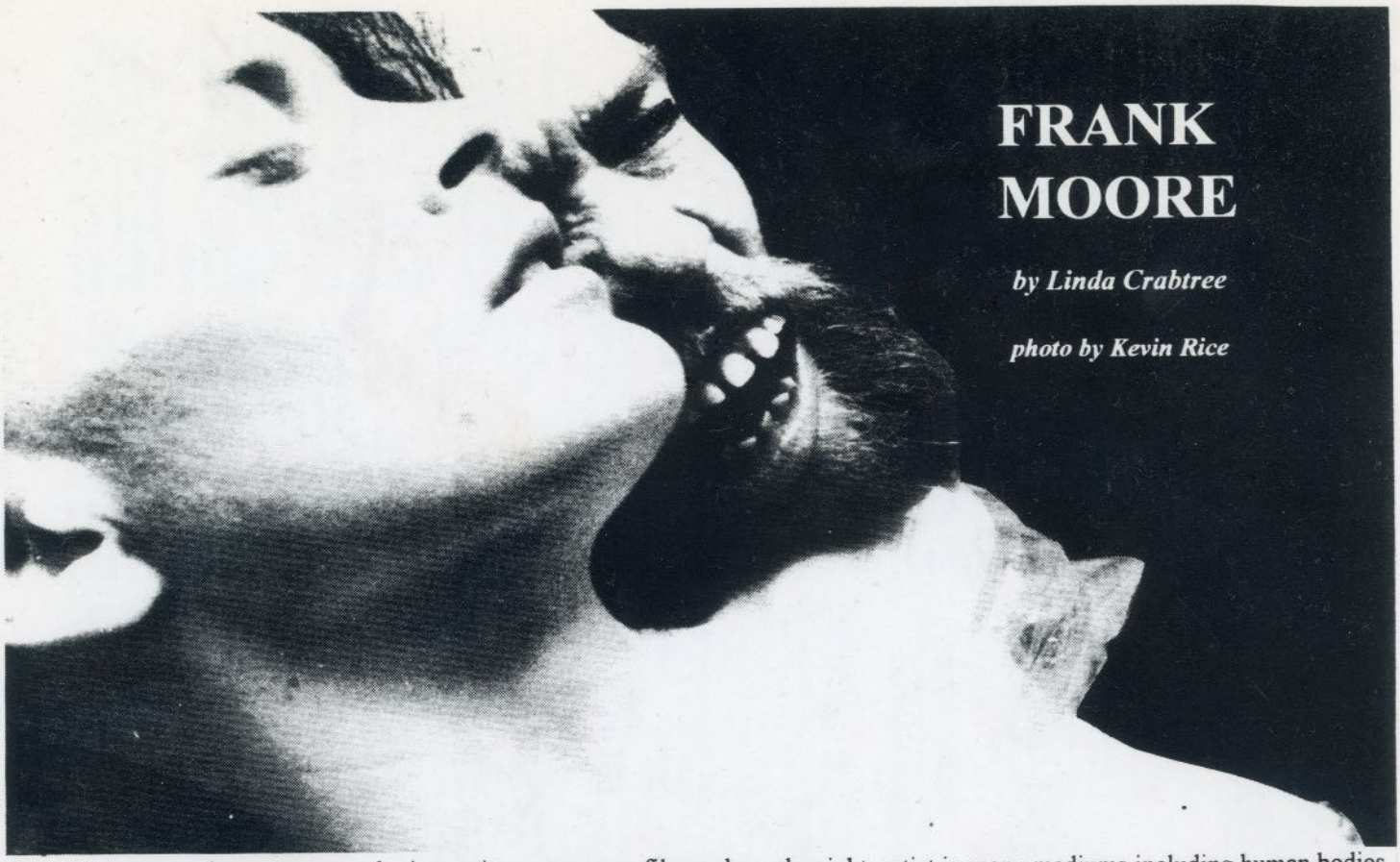
unfortunately, the new age goddess haunts the show just below the surface, producing a sub layer or a hidden message of separation and isolation which really runs in conflict with both annie's basic nature and the community that her show calls forth. the new age goddess is basically a corruption of the original goddess which is the yin principle which is within all of us no matter what our gender. the original ritual journey or task was to reunite the yin and yang principles into the original creative life force, and to apply, along this major journey, the yin principle for the tribal welfare. one of the powerful characteristics of the original goddess has always been an unlimited inclusiveness. this is also true of annie personally, and it radiates from her show. but both the original goddess and annie are being misused, distorted, by the forces of exclusion as an excuse and a justification of elitism, separatism, discrimination, fear, and isolation. these forces of exclusion are the main cause of today's world conflict.

one of the problems is "goddess" is being personalized, then given a gender. it is common today to hear women saying "i'm a/the goddess." it has the protection of being politically correct. but if we change the words to " i am a/the male god," or "i'm a/the white god," or "i'm an/the american god," the fascistic dangers of this kind of logic become more obvious. moreover, the new age goddess has more to do with mother mary than the original goddess. it isolates women once again high upon the pedestal.

annie's story is one of self-discovery...both her personal self and our collective self. her method is to isolate and define aspects of herself, give each a name and a personality, and then live each to the hilt. so far, she has discovered ellen, annie, and anya. in the past, annie has described anya as the goddess, which attracted the confusion. recently she has started describing anya as a sacred prostitute. although this term is also misleading...created by one culture...it is not gender-driven...after all, annie introduced me to the audience as a sacred prostitute. what is really meant by the term is a cultural role of a magical channel between this and other realities by means of, among other techniques, expanded sex.

annie is only in the middle of her story. before it is all over, i think she will discover many more aspects within herself...and will then combine all of the aspects together. i'm looking forward to that climax!

FRANK MOORE



FRANK MOORE

by Linda Crabtree

photo by Kevin Rice

What do you say about a person who is a writer, composer, film maker, playright, artist in many mediums including human bodies, a wit, a thinker, a shaman, a visionary, a teacher?

What do you say about a man who because of cerebral palsy cannot speak, cannot feed himself, but who still has all the feelings, yearnings, hankerings and urges to have sex, to be touched by and touch a woman, to get tangled up in her hair, to kiss her breasts, to hold himself over her and lie under her?

What do you say about this man who knows that if we as people who have disabilities can somehow let others see us as simple flesh and blood just as they are with all the same feelings, desires and needs the fear will dissipate, the touch will begin .. the love will come?

What do you say about a man who writes plays with himself as the star and lets people touch and carry his naked body throughout the performance...who dances in his wheelchair, paints on naked women so he can feel the vibrations of their skin, smell their womaness, caress their curves with his eyes, touch tongue to nipple...who teaches people how to see deep down into themselves and into him and surrounds himself with people who bloom because he is...

Frank Moore. Some may say he's an exhibitionist, pervert; some...a scoundrel; some may say he's just very smart; he knew what he needed and needs to make himself whole and he has it...people who pay to come to him to learn and in doing so are his caregivers; women who love him because he adores them and they become his works of art; artists whose like minds illustrate his words and feelings.

What do you call Frank Moore...the man who looks as though he has nothing but probably has more than most of us... who, if we'd all listen, could change the course of mankind?

What is a Frank Moore? Something different, a person with a profound physical disability who, when you get to know him, has brought his mind forward to cover what you see with the most wonderful visions. Is he a chameleon? A devil? An angel? A visionary? A genius?You've got to make up your own mind for I believe we'll all see him differently, and thankfully he has what it takes to let you. For more information on **Frank Moore, the Cherotic Evolutionary**; his videotapes, plays, poetry, magazine, teaching, even T-shirts write to **P.O. Box 11445, Berkeley, CA 94712, U.S.A.; Tel: (510)526-7858 Fax: (510)524-2053**

Open your mind and you'll laugh, love and learn!

THE TORONTO STAR

Frank Moore: Evangelist of the avant-garde

OVER THE EDGE: Back cover of a recent issue of the Frank Moore magazine *The Cherotic Revolutionary*.

Medium Rare

PETER GODDARD

"My first stroke of good luck," says Frank Moore, "was that I was born spastic, unable to walk or talk. Add to this good fortune the fact that my formative years were in the '60s — my fate was assured."

A lot of hip hyperbole has swirled in anticipation of tomorrow's "interactive video performance" of Moore's *The Passion Cave*, 8 p.m. at the new Cinecycle, 129 Spadina Ave. It's due in part to the show's inevitably sexual context — Gwendolyn the prostitute/performance artist is expected to appear. But the anticipation also has to do with who — and what — Moore is.

Deformed shaman. Mystical shaman. Sexual warrior. With Moore, you're given reason to believe you're dealing with no mere artist but rather with some sort of evangelist of the avant-garde, one whose performances have all the aspects of beyond-the-fringe revivalist meetings, where he righteously revs up the multi-media.

Born with cerebral palsy in Columbis, Ohio, 49 years ago this Sunday, he was restricted for years to communicating only with his family. At 17, he invented a "head-pointer," which allowed him to express what he was thinking. But, he notes, "it took me another 10 years to shake off the isolation caused by my attitudes and self-image."

In a sense, he came to understand what the circus sideshow acts knew as they posed with such defiance for photographer Diane Arbus. Their bodies, by defining them so precisely (to the rest of the world) as "tiny," or "enormous," or "weird," had in fact also liberated them from the need to define themselves any further. These bodies in effect shielded them from any other unwanted questions. What's left to ask: the Fat Lady is a Fat Lady, right?

Hardly. "My body gives me a tool that other artists spend years to create," Moore says enthusiastically in *Art Of A Shaman*, his own apologia.

"Most artists are not as lucky as me. They do not have the built-in advantages and shields that I have. They need to resist the real world, the normal world more than I do."

Certainly, there's more of this heady optimism in *The Nude Cave*, the tape segment at tomorrow's performance — only in this instance it's body-talk we're hearing.

A woman strips off her clothes to a tinny electro-pop background. She showers, then ends up sprawled across on a mussed-up bed with the artist himself. There's no sexual set-up or sexual posturing. She's Earth Mama-ish, he's helpless as a seal pup, pale pink and frail-looking in his utter nakedness, unable to do much other than grin his famous, gap-toothed grin.

While *The Nude Cave* offers little either for hard-core voyeurs or vid-freaks, it does have a kind of therapeutic value. Frank looks like a nice guy, in bed or out.

But maybe I'm not taking him seriously enough. Others do, certainly. A 1990 performance in Cleveland prompted critic Amy Sparks to call it "beyond performance," and into "thwarting nature."

High Performance, the performance art quarterly, reviewed another event where to "The Ballad Of The Green Berets" Moore was wheeled out on stage howling, eventually to end up wrestling with "two female attendants." Eventually, everyone started tearing off their clothes. "You don't see stuff like that every day," concluded critic Lewis MacAdams.

Aside from an active teaching and writing career — much of it self-published — the history of Moore's performances goes back to 1968 where he was newly active in and around the burgeoning rock/psychedelic/sexual freedom culture group groping its way through California.

In the *Art Of A Shaman* (46 pages, published by Inter-Relations Press in Berkley, Calif., and based on a lecture Moore gave at New York University), he notes: "My personal roots are in the idealism of the '60s. That was when I broke out of personal, physical isolation."

Like many an other erotic evangelists, Moore quickly evolved his own philosophy which he terms "Cherotic Magic." Evolving from his notion of "eroplay," *chero* means "attracting pleasurable, healing energy of excited calmness." Elsewhere, he writes more mundanely: "Chero is what attracts other people to you."

Chero's power is not to be trifled with. Already it's spawned its own 'zine, *The Cherotic Revolutionary* (edited, of course, by Frank Moore).

"For and by people on The Edge . . . if not over The Edge," the *Cherotic Revolutionary* offers a mind-blowing melange of '60s-isms, except that in this application, sex replaces drugs.

The more you read about him, the more likely you're to get lost in the grand conceptualizations Moore attracts. His art, goes yet another explanation, is an "underground war against fragmentation on all realities."

And maybe that's to be expected from someone who even has his own "mythic" school, The University Of Possibilities.

His own definition is neater, though.

Moore explained (via his writing machine) that he's someone who "creates an environment in which people can have a direct experience of an altered state."

N° 278
Jun 23, 1995
XTRA!

Touch me, feel me

Frank Moore turns cerebral palsy into an art form

Story by Kika Thorne

If, as Michel Foucault says, change occurs when you are blissed out, then go for the ecstasy at Pleasure Dome.

Ever since Annie Sprinkle told us he was one of her sexual teachers, Toronto sex radicals have been awaiting the arrival of Frank Moore.

Diagnosed with cerebral palsy — he can't walk, talk or stand — Moore inverts the sign of freak by transforming spectacle into intimacy. Through an outpouring of zines, videos and performances, he invites audiences to understand their bodies through Eroplay.

Says Moore, who communicates with a pointer and word board, "Eroplay is a made-up word meaning intense physical playing and touch of ourselves and others. It's also the force or energy which is released as a result."

In the video Erotic Play, where 60 people undress for him, it's women who are more playful at public display.

But how have men accepted his sexual teaching?

"In the early 1970s," says Moore, "women were interested. Now men are exploring. I just found out that Keith Hennessey at the 848 Community Space in San Francisco has been teaching Eroplay for years in his sex workshops for gay men."

Most of Moore's collaborators appear to be able-bodied. But has the disabled community followed suit?

"Whomever comes to me, that's who I relate to. In the past, the local disability movement has had mixed feelings about the sensuality of my work."

Linda Mac, his partner in work and play, says, "Making art for arts sake, rather than disabled art, was not seen as a cool thing. But recently the movement has begun to recognize Frank as ahead of his time.

"Frank has always identified as a person first, disabled second."

Moore's oeuvre, which opens Cinecycle's new location, features the videos Fairy Tales Can Come True, The Outrageous Horror Show, Erotic Play, Chero Collage and Out Of Isolation. His work cripples judgement, melting the union of beauty and the grotesque.

In an attempt to eliminate the passive audience syndrome, Moore will also create a performance site to offer experimention with touch; naked performers will be on hand to lead any interested participants into Moore's cave.

Says Moore: "I'm not shy or modest in any sense. I use nudity to strip down."

I dare you.

SEX UNDER WRAPS. An audience member rocks with Moore at a poetry bash in 1988.

On the Screen

The Passion Cave.
By Frank Moore.
$2-$4. 8pm. Fri. Jun 23.
Cinecycle.
129 Spadina Ave (rear).
Wheelchair accessible.
(416) 966-8732.

toronto, canada

Generation Sex

FRANK MOORE: DEFORMED SEX SHAMAN

by Mike Hovancsek

I first heard of Frank Moore when I saw articles about him in Magical Blend and High Performance. His highly controversial performance art incorporates nudity, trance rituals, music, film, art, "eroplay," and body painting in order to bring about an awareness of the human body. His 48 hour performances are powerful, highly personal ceremonies that extend well beyond sexuality. These ideas are even more interesting in Frank's hands because he is severely handicapped. Confined to a wheel chair and unable to speak, he communicates with a lettered board and by typing on a computer with a pointer that is attached to his forehead.

Some time ago, I wrote to Frank to ask him about doing an interview. When he agreed, I sent along a bunch of interview questions. Instead of responding in a Q&A format, however, he wrote the following article that addresses all the questions I asked. The article will appear in Tab in two parts. Here is part one.

My first stroke of good luck was I was born spastic, unable to walk or talk. Add to this good fortune the fact that my formative years were in the sixties -- my fate was assured! When I was born, doctors told my parents that I had no intelligence, that I had no future, that I would be best put into an institution and be forgotten. This was a powerful expectation with all the force of western science and medicine as well as social influences, behind it. It would have been easy for my parents to be swept up into this expectation so that it would have created my reality. I would have long ago died without any other possibilities. Instead, my parents rejected this expectation for the possibility they saw in my eyes\; for what for them should have been true.

I have always been lucky. I have a body that is ideal for a performance artist. I have always wanted to be a performer. When I was a kid, my younger brother used to get mad when people looked at me when he pushed me to the movies or to the teen club. He cried, but I liked to have people looking at me. That is what I mean by "I am lucky." I am lucky I am an exhibitionist in this body. One time when I was working out on the jungle gym outside of our house a kid came by and asked if I was a monster. I just roared like a monster. It was fun.

I started out in the late 60's in Redlands (Ca) High School writing for underground papers as a political columnist (as well as for the regular school paper)...sneaking into the mimeograph room at school to run off a hundred copies under the protection of a friendly teacher. Of course, the teacher always, as well as us, got into hot water...and the access to the mimeograph machine was closed. No access, no underground paper. There was not any question about our buying our own mimeograph machine...no money.

But it took only a year or so for the underground press to move from the mimeograph stage into being run off at offset print shops. The underground press had its roots going back through the radical press of the 20's and 30's and in the poetry press. The kind of person who put out these papers poured all their personal money into it, then hoped by selling ads, selling papers, by magic, the paper would stay afloat. There was rarely any question of making money on it. But when your nest egg, your dead aunt's money, ads, sales, or whatever was supporting your rag ran out, that paper of visions died. Fortunately, there was always a new paper being born to fill the empty space. In college and afterwards I wrote for such papers with names such as **The Mind Vendor** and **The Middle Eye**. My pen name was "The Unicorn."

1968 California State University, San Bernardino, political/life pieces.

It was not until 1970 that I started trying to live out my inner visions. I tried to get the ok at Cal State, San Bernardino, to produce my all-nude play **The Cube** on campus. To my surprise, the college said "yes." I couldn't get actors, though. When I went back there in the early 80's to lecture and perform, they still remembered the play that wasn't produced!

Also in college, I started doing political pranks, like rolling into the Marines's recruiting office to join, wanting to push "the button." Around this time, I rejected politics as a means for effective subversive change, and began looking towards art and magic for an effective channel.

I saw my life was heading back into isolation if I did not make some radical changes. There was a hippie commune in the very straight San Bernardino. I got to know the woman who had been a beat in the 50's and who owned the commune property through the underground paper I wrote for. I started having my brother take me there so I could talk to Louise Scott. I told her how I wanted to move out of home....but didn't see any way to. She said I could live with her and move to Santa Fe, N.M. with her. I had moved out of home before but always in town as an extension of "home"...finally being sucked back to home. I knew when I made my move, it had to be as far away as possible. I dropped out of college and hitched to hippieland in Santa Fe...before Louise. The plan was she with her two kids would move out when she sold her property. That took a LONGER time than she had planned. For two months, I lived at a Santa Fe "crash pad" mission run by Louise's friend. I had to depend on the kids who drifted through The Center for all my needs. It was a very important time for me.

It was the gentle guidance by Louise during the year I lived with her that started me seeing my body as a tool. She told me people could use me as a medium for getting through to other dimensions. Because of the slowness of my communication board, they were forced to slow down. She said it was just my luck to be born into the long tradition of the deformed shaman, the wounded healer, the blind prophet, the club-footed "idiot" court jester. Primitiv

Part 1 of 3

9/95

e tribes believed that if a cripple could survive childhood, he was blessed by the gods\; he was special\; he was not really from this physical world\; he belonged to the spiritual world, with an inside channel to the gods\; he was not suited for the normal activities of living such as hunting and fighting\; everything he did or said were omens from gods. He was taken care of by the tribe and lived in freedom.

The court jesters in the Middle Ages came from this tradition. They were given an easy life and freedoms such as the ability to tell the king off because their babbling just might have been divine in origin. Parents were known to cripple their children in the hope the child would become a jester, a prophet, a shaman. She (Louise) said my body gives me a tool that other artists spend years to create. She also encouraged my painting which I had done since high school. What she really saw me as was a dancer. She had me boogieing at community dances and at bars....to the local band, *The Family Lotus*.

But in a way, my life was too comfortable so I hitchhiked in 1970 from Santa Fe to the Brotherhood of the Spirit in Northwest Massachusetts. I just appeared on their steps, not knowing much about them, not having any way back to Santa Fe...and the 350 of them not knowing anything about me...and they would have preferred to keep it that way....until the leader walked by, looked at me, and said "you can stay." The commune was a spiritual cult with the communal rock band, *Spirit in Flesh*, as its center...and of course, the commune leader was the lead singer. The first night I was there, they had a concert. So of course I started dancing...until the members told me to stop...because crips shouldn't dance. The next day the leader made me the dancer in the band. Having fun, I toured the East Coast with the band. I danced on stage at Carnegie Hall (we rented it). So my first performance gig was as a dancer.

My first major performance began in the commune. The commune was itself a liminal altered state in which most of the people went around doing their everyday duties, talking about who they were in past lives, going into trances, channeling spirits and other things that I, skeptic, thought were weirdnesses better suited to cheap horror movies than to real life. The people would not listen to me when I tried to tell them this spiritual business was spacing them out of this human life. One day, when I was typing, a spirit who later introduced himself as Reed, came through me, typing, "You are not typing this, Frank." At the beginning, I thought I made Reed up to get the people to listen and to start creating my ideals in the world. I may have been taking more credit than I deserved because Reed and two other spirits/characters/persons took on reality for themselves. People waited for the next "lecture" to come through. The spirits talked to people, guiding them (and me) to create a new personal community. Even when I left the spiritual commune, reading the new lectures for the people around me became performances aimed at them. People started seeing Reed and the others in their dreams. The question of whether Reed is "real" is not a useful question in shamanistic performance -- that is, performance for change. Reed is real whether he is a spirit floating around somewhere, or my alter-ego, or a conning fiction which I used as an invisible puppet. His reality is the change he created in the outer world. Reed lasted for three years as an active performance. Later, I edited the material and published it as the book Art of Living.

1972 B.A. English--University of New Mexico
1972 Completed program Film Making--Moving Image Lab. at Anthropology Film Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico

After a year at the commune, I moved back to Santa Fe and started searching for a method to work and to live with people in an intense, direct way. Ever since my college days, I had been writing nonsense scripts dealing with nudity and nonsexual eroticism. Also during my college days, I read such books as **Toward a Poor Theatre** and **The Theatre and its Double**. It was not until I and my communal family, however, took a very intense film-making course in Santa Fe in 1972 that I was able to put my weird ideas into performance. Officially that year, I was getting my B.A. in English at the University of New Mexico. I was really taking an intensive, 9 to 5, five days a week, four month film making program at The Moving Image Lab of The Anthropology Film Center in Santa Fe. This course was limited to ten students. I made films of rolling nude down a hill, smearing bodies with baby food, and nursing by a sexy woman. When the film course was over, however, I did not have money to make films.

I had been painting oils for years, painting with a brush strapped to my forehead, painting nudes from magazine photos. One day, a rich woman asked me to paint a nude of her. I went to her fancy house. She undressed for me to paint her picture! On that day I realized how art can give people permission to do what is normally forbidden.

This began my street series. I sat on the center plaza, "selling newspapers." Selling papers was only a context. The context for me was an excuse for watching people, talking to people who had the slowness and the insightful curiosity to stop and talk...a way for me to ask them to model for me. These special people were my real targets for my street pieces. They saw past the mask of the cripple. The masses used the mask of the cripple to relieve their guilt, to reinforce their fragile superiority of being "normal," to make themselves feel better by throwing money (up to $20 a throw) at the less fortunate at whom they would not even look. The third type of person was made up of the poor and the kids who gave money as a pure spiritual act. When the special person stopped to talk, a crowd gathered around to listen. Money fell on my board when I was asking the special person to model.

The newspaper selling quickly fell away. All I had to do was sit there on the sidewalk, being available to talk. It did not matter that I dressed fancy or had a sign saying "I don't want money\; I want you." The money kept falling. I did discover, though, that there are special spots and special ways of sitting which attract people. Sit at a slightly different angle, or on a spot a few feet away from the special spot and you become invisible.

I have done these street performances across the country. I have gotten tickets to the Joffrey, filled a couple of workshops, got my cameraman for one of my films, all from the street pieces. I almost caused a riot in front of Caesar's Palace in Atlantic City, N.J. The crowd did not take kindly to the casino guards trying to push me away because I was taking Caesar's money.

I painted a lot of the special people from the street performances. I noticed the changes in the people when they took off their clothes\; how they relaxed, how they started talking on a deeper level about important personal things. After I got a taste of direct inter-personal acting out of erotic dreams, painting became too static. I began a series of private performances called Nonfilms. I asked the special people from the street performances to come to my home, into my study which was my first cave. Within this cave, cut off from the normal reality, we created scenes which no camera would shoot, nobody would see. Although I had played with my friends before in nonsexual eroticism, this was the first time I tried to use "sexual" acts in a non-sexual art form. I was surprised with the power that this released. Because of these scenes, the people started talking about their lives during these sessions and said it helped their other relationships. Not one person minded that there was no film. These nonfilms were the base for my career in relationship counseling. I started looking for some other way to work with people. I tried to cast a play, but I couldn't find enough people.

I started thinking and writing about a new kind of performance. Then, I somehow stumbled upon a book, **Environmental Theater** by Richard Schechner, a book about a theater of active involvement and participation, of nudity and intimate physicality\; of risk-taking and change. It was right up my alley. Richard's insights and experiments were inspiring to me.

It seemed to me **The Performance Group** of Richard's was not well-versed in, or committed to, a living communal intimacy, so they retreated from the edge when they

were expected to live the personal intimacy they were acting out. My years of communal living and spiritual study gave me needed keys to take what Richard had done forward. The book fit so well with my own experiments, philosophy and vision, it became a base of the next stage of the work.

I used my communal family of four as a core to start a weekly drop-in workshop held in a Santa Fe pre-school. I never knew who would show up each week. People from my street performances, free-spirits who heard rumors about this naked happening, a **Wait Until Dark** cast of straight actors whose director required them to come, all were thrown into this crazy experiment. I never knew what I was going to do because I never knew whom I would have to work with, or what I would have to deal with. This madhouse gave me a flexibility and a trust that the vision would guide me to create a temporary communal reality from those who were there but the casual drop-in format placed a limit on how deep the intimacy could get. In my communal family, we were creating a way of being which was an underground base for the art. This base was a powerful influence but it wasn't yet the clear focus of the work.

1973 University of New Mexico--a 24-hr. piece, "Audition".
University of Albuquerque--"Audition".

In May 1973, the end of this stage was a twenty-four hour performance. Two years before when I was living with Louise, I became aware of the magical quality of extended time lengths when I attended an all-night peyote ceremony of the Native American church in Taos. Time was as powerful as the magic medicine in creating a group reality trance. To try out this time factor, I took my cast to Albuquerque to do what amounted to a 24-hour performance. For the first six hours, we approached people on the campus of the University of New Mexico, people with whom we would like to play, inviting them to an audition that night in the College Art Department for a happening. Then, after dinner, we did the workshop exercises with the 12 people who showed up. Slowly, taboos were broken and a community of performance magically appeared...which was lucky because I could only book the room until midnight. I had to truck the performance across the city to the University of Albuquerque. The sense of community was strong enough that everyone came along. At dawn, as we stepped out of the studio, there was the crisp feeling of being born into a new world.

1974 Off-Off Broadway Theater, New York City--a ritual play, "Inter-Relation".

Our communal living situation, the nonfilms, the outrageous events of the workshop, and my physical visibility all created a mysterious, kinky, threatening reputation in the small city of Santa Fe, which made it increasingly hard to get new people for projects. I could not tame the art down because I knew this reaction was telling us what we were doing was right so eight of the cast decided to move to New York City\; a big city with a lot of people on which to draw. One of our fantasies was to charge admission to our everyday life. (I am now playing with the idea of selling tickets to my natural death).

We set up a workshop space in our loft at 32nd and Fifth. This time, the workshop was closed and committed, lasting several months. I got some actors from auditions but most came from my street pieces\; people ranging from an ex-hooker to an angry cabbie/comedian. While failing to develop into a true community, this group performed at a ballroom a ritual I created from two of Schechner's exercises. Again, we got our audience by approaching people in the Village and inviting them to that night's event. We did this performance, **Inter-Relations**, on a Thursday and a Friday. The trance of the temporary community was so great that the same audience came back for the second night. This often happens in my work.

I was not satisfied in New York City. I never broke into anything. The permanent community as a lifestyle did not spread from my New Mexico group into the workshop. In the summer of 1975, I moved with the five original New Mexico members to Berkeley to be joined by two others coming from New Mexico.

In Berkeley, I met Linda Mac, who became my partner in shamanistic crime for over 20 years. Not wearing a bra and leaning over the counter to talk to this weird guy who wheeled into the travel agency, saying she would be great in this play, sealed her fate. After two weeks, she quit her job in the travel agency. Other new people would soon join us.

With this core communal group as a base, I started developing very quickly. We set up **Inter-Relations**, with **The Theater of Human Melting** as its artistic identity. I got a Baptist Seminary to give me a room where I could conduct workshops and talk to people. This was an unlikely setting to do shamanistic work.

To tell the truth, before Linda, the workshop was not clicking. Linda had led people through a visualization popular with the growth movement. We spent months combining it with the workshop. We, then, put up fliers for the new workshop. We got no response...except one fellow who did not want to do my workshop, demanding, instead, that I meet with him in private sessions. Being flexible, I giggled, rubbed my hands, and said, "Why not?" This fellow turned out to be a psychic teacher whose students, when they heard that he was coming to me, wanted to come for private sessions as well as do the workshop.

The private sessions were a combination of Reed and nonfilms in which I allowed myself the freedom to say and do whatever came to me, no matter how off-the-wall and outrageous it seemed. I used nonsense, blatant insults, humor, the holy obvious, nudity, and eroticism to break into the altered reality of controlled folly. It was not a professional therapy where a serious listener nods and grunts, or a spiritual trance in which an Americanized guru sits aloof, spinning truisms. I was a person who wanted to mingle his life intimately with their lives, using a bigger-than-life mask/character of the trickster shaman to reach this end. This intimate focus trimmed the original flood of people over a two year period down to 30 people who seriously wanted a community of intimate relationships. By combining these private individual "pieces" with the workshop, the communal spirit began to flow from my core family into the group.

The heart of the workshop was "demanding" in various different forms. The only things out of bounds both in the workshop and the group were actual sex between nonmates and harming violence. This created a safe environment in which people could allow one another to trust, to be demanded of. In the workshop, I picked a person to make a demand either on a particular person, or whomever he picked, or on the whole group. The demanded one must satisfy the demander. The demander must stay with the demand until he is truly and fully satisfied. This puts both the demander and the demanded under pressure of honesty and vulnerability. I never had any idea whom I would pick for the demander until the workshop. This forced a rugged spontaneity. Some of these lasted for weeks, some for a minute\; some were ruthlessly silly, some were intensely personal. Because actual sex was off limits, the demands could be erotically free and wacky. The demands as private performances revealed secret, over-the-edge characters, hidden fantasies, and other silliness which once released, seeped into normal life. One week, we played war games as kids, using Berkeley as our battleground. Next week, we buried one of us alive in a coffin to have a rebirth. A third week, we had a gross-out contest, the winning act of which was someone drinking his own piss. All of this outrageousness was made possible by being in the state of innocent play together for over three years. From this altered state, households and businesses began to form.

1977 The Haste St. Storefront, Berkeley, CA--directed a series of private 48-hr.performance pieces, "The Processes," which choreographed as many as thirty people as undercover actors.

1975 The Farm, S.F., CA--produced "The Erotic Test," a multi-media event.

The thirty of us began to go en mass to nightclubs to see our favorite bands...**The Tubes, Leila and the Snakes, and Country Porn.** We dressed in skimpy, wild costumes, danced without regard to gender...in short, had fun. The bands (all of whom combined music, humor and sex to create stage shows) began to include us in their shows from the audience. One time, the manager of a club threatened to kick us out if we didn't start acting like everyone else...until Leila informed him she wouldn't play without us. The rock papers began writing about us. We also saw Patti Smith perform at a local bar a few times. I started to have a sense of how to use the format of the rock show for shamanistic purposes. I first began to experiment with this when I coached the punk band **X-Ray-Ted** on their act.

The group's first major public piece was a fantasy costume parade through Berkeley, flaunting brightly painted skin and see-through costumes of net and lace. The parade ended up with a free punk concert in the park with Leila, X-Ray-Ted, etc.

After a second parade had gotten out of hand and turned into dulling sleaze, I organized an indoor multi-media carnival in a large San Francisco warehouse, **The Farm**, where adults could play like kids in a safe environment. Providing adult playgrounds is one of the basic goals of my work. Since I think playing is a safe, mind-altering drug, I called my carnival **The Erotic Test** after the acid test of the Merry Pranksters.

1976 M.A. Psychology--University Without Walls, Berkeley
1976 My Studio/Storefront, Berkeley, California--led The Theater of Human Melting based on workshops which held thirty people together for performances of my plays such as "Climbing to the Center," Glamour" and my rewrite of "Lysistrata".

In order to do more public pieces, I moved the performance work into a Berkeley storefront. A major public performance in the space was **Glamour**. I based this environmental play on actual strippers in a divey North Beach joint. I used this play as a process to get one of the actresses to become a dynamic performer. As part of the rehearsals, I had the actresses work 8-hour shifts at the real joint with the real girls whom they were becoming. As another section of the bringing out of a dynamic star, I put her into a 24-hour nightmare inside a cold swinging box. This nightmare again revealed the magic of extended time.

For the play, I turned the storefront into a copy of the dive. The play surrounded the audience, making them play the role of the joint audience. On the nights that the actors didn't create the realism, I would stop the play, give the audience their money back, and invite them to return the next night. They did. I am ruthless in pursuing the inner quality I seek in people.

During the rehearsals of **Glamour**, when the strip joint got unbearably boring after hours upon hours, I took a walk along Broadway, into what then was the West Coast hardcore punk center, the Mabuhay Gardens or the "Fab Mab." Since I did not have anything else to do, I asked the gruff manager if I could do my next production at his club. To my surprise, Dirk Dirksen was a visionary who, instead of seeing a crip asking for a hand-act, saw me somehow as a misfit artist perfect for his new wave cabaret. Dirk gave me a sheltered theatre for six years, with complete artistic freedom and moral support. The first production was a raping of a high-brow comedy, **Meb**, which I turned into a multi-media farce, full of camp, nudity, sex, violence and rock 'n roll. The straight playwright walked out in horror, the club owner wanted us out, and only a handful of people came but Dirk wanted to extend the run. He loved it.

An important character came out of this play. She is Dotty. She was created when an actress just could not remember her lines, cues, or anything. Finally, I made her a mentally retarded free spirit, wandering around in slow motion wherever she pleased, doing whatever she pleased. Dotty (played by **Annie Sprinkle, Veronica Vera, Linda Montano**, etc.), has been climbing over my audience ever since, playing with them.

During this time, I felt the need to go farther into the core of the ritual work. I started creating 48-hour pieces. During these 48-hour pieces there was created an altered reality around one person who undertook this journey to obtain a list of life goals.

I had a team of assistants known to the pilgrim but I also had actors, unknown by the pilgrim, who I placed in the normal world to interact with the pilgrim. By saying, "I have planned everything you (the pilgrim) will experience during this process as well as everyone who you will meet...but I may be lying," it melted the normal reality with dream reality to form a liminal state. In this liminal state anything was possible and anyone could be a conspirator in this dream production. This was not only true for the pilgrim, but for everyone, including me. Real waiters, who I had never met before, acted as if I had paid them. This liminal force occurred even before the actual process. For example, I was painting a woman the day before a process. She turned out to be the pilgrim's girlfriend (one of many) whose very existence he had been hiding from me. To his shocked amazement, she appeared in an erotic scene in his process. I had to be flexible and open enough to use everything and anything that the dream gave me.

Within the liminal state, what usually is unbelievable, corny, tacky, suddenly becomes extremely powerful. Pilgrims not only swore I made beautiful women appear out of thin air, they gave me power to make the women disappear back into the same thin air, even though that was not a part of my trick. Things like water became potent magical drugs just through words. Within these temporary living myths, time became very plastic, as did other forms of reality. In these trance myths, I could use a wide range of ritual from smearing mud/food mixtures on nude bodies to high tech audio-visual spectacles. Another tool I discovered in these prolonged spells was to hide the powerful erotic rituals from the pilgrim audience by performing them inside a locked box, hidden cave, or secret tent. In this way, the unseen ritual affects the audience on the feeling level directly, without being filtered by the mind. I was serving two masters in these 48-hour dreams: the dream's vision and the pilgrim's goals. This became increasingly uncomfortable for me because the dream's vision would lead us into a much deeper, richer soil of realities than the goals would allow.

Within these pieces, I was able to evoke an awake dream where all things were possible, where limitations melted away. This is possible when taboos are broken -- not just "sexual" taboos, but also taboos of time, of space, of the accepted natural laws. You could not tell where the dream performance ends and the normal reality begins. You could never be sure if the sexy woman you happened to talk to in the cafe at lunch was a real person or an actor placed there specially for you. This mixing of realities opens the doors of freedom.

I did one of these pieces for Ami, an 18-year old sister of a member of the group. She was straight from Oshkosh, overweight, problems with drugs/booze, and unmotivated, except for a fantasy of becoming a rock singer...which was why she was doing the 48-hours. She had a great voice, a sharp mind, and a hidden, but powerful presence. Within the 48-hours, I got to where she could become a rock singer. At the end of the piece, I said I would build a band around her and another female lead singer...for whom we would audition. Ami sang raw, powerful, dirty. The other singer needed to match that intensity. Unfortunately, we found during auditions that women were so programmed to sing/be sweet/nice that they couldn't rawly belt out...even when they wanted to. Finally we found a singer who was willing to let me train her in my style.

Next issue: Part two discusses his recent projects and includes a description of the ideology behind the "Cherotic Revolution."

4.2

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SPECIAL ISSUE

HAGFISH

WAYNE KRAMER

DICK DALE, HI-STANDARD, NAPALM DEATH, 7 YEAR BITCH, BULLY CATS, The ATTIK, BIG ADVENTURE, FRANK MOORE part 2, MAKING SENSE, THE PROZAK DIARIES, CONTACT LISA, SLEAZE MEALS, KIRKLAND'S KHAOS, PAPER CUT, DEAD END CRUISERS, ANIME FOREVER, REVIEWS, more.....

8/96

Generation Sex: part two

FRANK MOORE: DEFORMED SEX SHAMAN

by Mike Hovancsek

I first heard of Frank Moore when I saw articles about him in *Magical Blend* and *High Performance*. His highly controversial performance art incorporates nudity, trance rituals, music, film, art, "cosplay", and body painting in order to bring about an awareness of the human body. His 48 hour performances are powerful, highly personal ceremonies that extend well beyond sexuality. These ideas are even more interesting in Frank's hands because he is severely handicapped. Confined to a wheel cha[illegible] weak, he com[illegible] and [illegible] poin[illegible] fore[illegible]

[illegible] to [illegible] to as[illegible] Wh[illegible] but [illegible] Inst[illegible] form[illegible] follo[illegible] the questions I as[illegible] this article, in is[illegible] explored Frank's [illegible] in performance art. Now, he[illegible] part two of "Frank Moo[illegible] Deformed Sex Shamen."

1978 The Mabuhay Gardens Nightclub, San Francisco, CA -- directed and performed in "The Outrageous Beauty Revue", a rock and roll cabaret show which ran every Saturday night for three years at the Mabuhay as well as visiting numerous local colleges and clubs.

Meanwhile, a member of the group, Diane Hall, had a few months off from her construction job, and wanted some project to do with me, so we created what was supposed to be a one night semi-real take off on a beauty contest. We offered $100 in cash prizes for the most outrageous/erotic acts. We couldn't find enough real contestants to fill a three hour show, so I padded the show with the group members who couldn't win but who made the show way over the edge. For the m.c. I used an inner character who came on in drag as the costume parade. This character was a middle-aged, middle-American acid, fast nonsense talking, dizzy dame in a skin-tight Fredericks of Hollywood gown, long fake eyelashes, and a two-foot beehive bleached blonde wig with blinking Christmas lights. I called this Woolworth babe creature with a dumb sexist Spurt. They were the bridge between the wacky stage show and the audience. I forced Diane to improvise [illegible] give her a script. She turned out to be a comedic genius.

We did the show at The Mabuhay. You must understand that before this show, the biggest audience for any of my pieces had been [illegible] people. For this first **Outrageous Beauty Revue** we had a standing room only crowd of over 500 people. What was supposed to be a one night semi-real take off, a beauty contest transformed, right before my eyes before the first show had ended, into a tacky, wacky [illegible] ge review which caught the imagination of the press. We did the show for three years, usually [illegible] every week, but often twice a [illegible]. The **Outrageous Beauty** [illegible] looked like tacky entertainment performed by [illegible] people just for fun. This [illegible] now my cast also thought of it [illegible] ies. One of my major [illegible] that I did [illegible] on the [illegible] purposes, magical influences [illegible] hidden dimensions of our performance work.

Finally, [illegible] saw that the O.B.R. was the apex of my work until then. In the ritual pieces and in the workshop, we were battling the social fragmentation and isolation by underground channels, avoiding standard rules and criticisms and values. By using an entertainment channel to subvert entertainment we broadened the attack and our vulnerability to attack.

The O.B.R. was a cabaret show that tried to short circuit the cabaret [illegible] of time and stage. It did this by being a show of people who were having fun and who were living their fantasies -- a show that included the audience directly in the action -- an unpolished show that flaunted nudity, eroticism, and gore in a silly, child-like playfulness. It was an ever-changing show with pregnant sex symbols, nude girls, crippled rockstars, men as women and women as men without any sexual meaning. This was very uplifting for some people. If we could be on stage doing silly things, it is possible for anyone to do what they dream. It was also very threatening for a lot of people. My singing took away their excuses for why they were not what they wanted to be.

It looked like entertainment but it really was a medium to spread the playful communal spirit which we had worked years on fine tuning. This underground spirit of communal fun or playful folly secretly sucked the audience in. This spirit allowed us to do things, which would normally be violent or sexual, in a sparkling, playful innocence. This became obvious when I used to let naive people do acts in the show. They never reached the intensity or the tightrope edge which the cast took for granted.

The tacky, wildly colorful, loud show of bad taste was really a cover, a distraction of the audience's attention, so that the hidden magical trance could take them over. A trance can be cast by showing them something out of their reality. Little kids often become frozen on the spot when they see me, my special body, in a cafe. We just greatly magnified this trance process in the show by throwing out many of these trance inducing images of taboos, of crip rockstars, of pregnant nudes, of silly sex and violence. Then the real show happened within this inner trance.

There was a vision in the show...the vision that has led me throughout my work. Art comes from the soul that anyone can tap into. I created the show from modules that I could combine in countless ways. Each module was a fantasy either of mine or, more often, of the person in the act. I worked on a module just enough to make it performable but I would not allow it to be polished, refined. I wanted a module to grow and change in performance so the performance and the audience would get the full evolving magic. I kept changing the order of modules to encourage fresh evolution. I took modules in danger of becoming polished out of the line up, putting them into an ever-growing module library to be pulled out when the

need arose. In this way, the show was always evolving into something new while remaining what it was.

Because in the **O.B.R.**, I was using, and subverting, standard forms of entertainment, there was tremendous pressure on me to polish the show up to make it more sellable, more entertaining. This pressure did not come from the critics, but from friends and cast members. "Add rim shots, tighten it up. Then the show will be a commercial success"\; "We should rehearse more, then we could be good theatre, good music". The vision was not about commercial success, nor reaching a lot of people, nor about good entertainment, nor art. The vision is to create trances and realities which will bring change. This is my vision. The vision has me. I am its tool. If I had not stayed within the vision, I would have been lost within artistic pressures. Art should be a vision quest.

Other kinds of pressures were to change the content, the tools, and the focus of the work. People always say they like the work because it is strong, but I should get over my obsession with sex and nudity, and get on to more important issues\; I should not get "stuck" in one vision. What they do not realize is what they like about the work, the strength, comes from being committed to a single vision, no matter what the current trends and fashions are. I cannot imagine more important issues than sex and freedom symbolized by nudity but, as this paper shows, these are not my ultimate focus. Sex and nudity are powerful digging tools to reach the intimate community. By limiting the tools of art, art itself is limited.

At first, when we did an hour version of the show two nights a week at The Mab, all the music was recorded...and I was rarely in the show...except for a pie in my face as I sat in the audience. I did some cameos....such as pitch-acting as the "straight-man" for the lusty sadistic nurse to the tune of Devo...and as one of the hunks (along with the other guys in wheelchairs and some of the women in sexy drag) of "Macho Man" by The Village People.

These acts were why some people said the show was in bad taste, was "exploitive". What made it thus was not just what was done, but who was doing it...crips, women and other "untalented" unfortunates. The first assumption of the people who were offended was that these were able-bodied actors making fun of crips\; then, when it became clear we were real crips, the leap into dumbness was that someone was exploiting us. When they got it into their heads that we had created our own acts, the new way to deny our power was to say we were exploiting our own bodies. Forget nudity. Forget being sexual. Just by getting up onto the stage we were exploiting our own bodies. Women share this hidden yoke of suppression. By breaking this yoke, by offending a lot of people, the show released, inspired, and liberated a lot more. Artists and musicians come up to me today and say they saw the **O.B.R.** when they were kids and thought if we could do that, they could do what they dreamt.

Around this time, I began to be able to explode the concept of the disabled artist who does crip art for other crips and/or to make "normals" feel good...not really explode for me (because I had never accepted that role....even though it took the newspapers ten years to really accept the fact). For the last 15 years, they have just called me that strange, weird, threatening, sexual artist. That's progress! Because the **O.B.R.** became a landmark in the San Francisco punk/art scene...a landmark that got a lot of coverage...a long-running over-the-edge show in which the director and some of the cast just happened to be crips...the **O.B.R.** busted the crip role...and without much notice...because that was just one of many taboos that we were "dumb" to.

The disabled community has always regarded me with mixed emotions. This is because I never have been "politically correct". I was never "disabled enough" in my image. It's like how quite a few "gay" bookstores will not carry my zine because it isn't "queer enough"! Most of the artists in the zine just happen to be gay/bi!

Last year, I was interviewed by a sexy poet in a wheelchair for a cable show on the disabled. On-camera, she gave me shit for "sexual" art but off-camera, she said historically I was the model for artists with physical disabilities because I was doing art just as a person in the early 70's...when they were at home coming to terms with being a person, not even allowing themselves to dream about being artists. Then they saw me...and thought if I could do it...they could be artists too. Why did I have to do weird sexual art? That fucks up my role-model role! Moreover, she confirmed that I had been blackballed from disabled performance events, including a show on "eroticism and the disabled"!

Anyway...it took about six months to get the live band, **The Superheros**, "ready". **The Superheros** then had "real" musicians, the two powerful female lead singers, and four back-up singers who never quite hit the high notes...but they looked good. We did "Leader of the Pack" with the hunk driving a motorcycle onto the stage, then driving off with the back-up singers...who, after the crash, crawled back half-dressed, bloody, with a rubber head which they made out with. The two female lead singers did Meatloaf's "Paradise by the Dashboard Light", complete with a steamy make-out scene. We did an original "Beaver" to the tune of "Fever". One of the disabled guys did a great Sinatra ("My Way") and an even better impersonation of John Belushi doing Joe Cocker doing "A Little Help from My Friends".

But my **O.B.R.** cast saw none of this because I could not impart the vision to them. They saw the show just as an outlet for their fantasies and creativeness. They saw the Mabuhay as just a dive...even when people like **Frank Zappa** and **Robert Fripp** came and loved the show. For the cast, the show was not very good theater that they did for fun. It was something that could be left behind because it was not important. With three years of on-stage "training", some of the cast wanted to move on to "Real Art", "Real Music", "Real Theatre". This lack of a bigger vision of both the historical roots and the magical social impact spelled the end of the community.

Next issue: FAIRYTALES CAN COME TRUE in Generation Sex: part 3; Frank Moore: Deformed Sex Shamen.

#15

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a multiple dose of sound activity

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D GENERATION

THICKHEAD GRIN, HOUSE OF BLUES, FRANK MOORE PART 3, QUONSET HUT, MAKING SENSE, SLEAZEMEALS, KIRKLAND'S KHAOS, JUST DAVE, YOUR TASTE IN MUSIC SUCKS, E-I-E-I-O, TONS OF REVIEWS, AND MORE...

5/97

Generation Sex: part three

FRANK MOORE: DEFORMED SEX SHAMAN

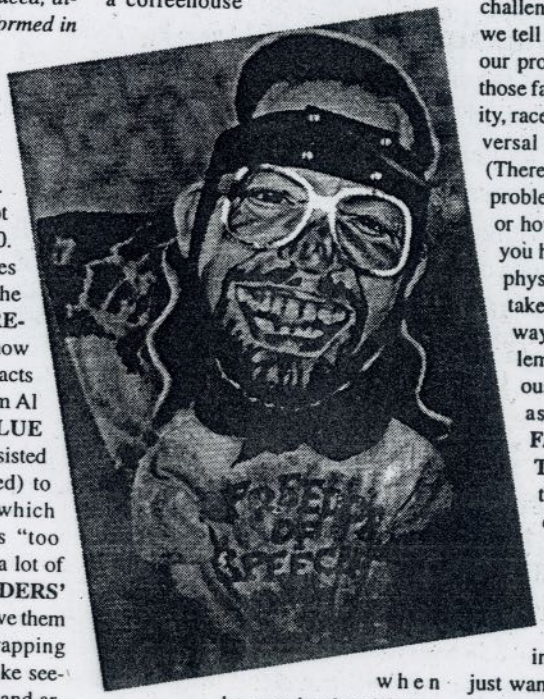
by Mike Hovancsek

1977 The Blind Lemon, Berkeley, CA—continued directing the weekly workshop and the series of private 48-hr. performances pieces, "The Processes", which choreographed as many as thirty people as undercover actors. Also produced punk and comedy shows.
1980 "VideoWest", a T.V. weekly—they produced and aired a segment on my work. "Bizarre in America", a feature film—they produced and included a segment on my work. "Fairytales Can Come True", a video—I produced, directed, wrote, edited and performed in it. (Distributed by Multi-Media Resource Center, S.F., CA)

I want to start talking about **FAIRYTALES CAN COME TRUE**, the first video I made. The history of it brings up a lot of subjects. I made it in 1980. But the "why" I made it goes back over a year before when the **OUTRAGEOUS BEAUTY REVUE** was going strong. The show was always in the media, it's acts were filmed for T.V. shows from Al Goldstein's **MIDNIGHT BLUE** (which didn't use it because I insisted on a say on how it was edited) to **THAT'S INCREDIBLE!** (which didn't use it because it was "too gross"), and for films. I gave a lot of interviews...I upset **THE READERS' DIGEST** because I wouldn't give them the social significance of wrapping nudes in cellophane...I said I like seeing skin under plastic. Photos and articles about the show were appearing in all kinds of magazines all over the world.

So when a guy came up to me one night after the show and said he was an independent producer and wanted to make a feature film using the show as the center, it didn't seem that out of place. I met with him to see if he was serious. He was. I said for me to do the project, 1.) I would need to be the director and 2.) I would have creative control. He said "no problem" so I wrote up an outline for the film...and then spent a year going to Mill Valley to work with his script writers, and to Hollywood to audition actresses for the female lead (even staying in the Beverly Hills hotel one night to live out a fantasy...then moving to another motel to get to work)...and working with the actress we found when the producer flew her to Berkeley.

Then it came time for the producer to fly to Florida to get the backer's money...tens of thousands to make a very low budget film. We met in a coffeehouse



when he got back with the money. He said it was time for us to get realistic. Nobody would back a film with me (being a crip) as a director. He knew that from the beginning, but he ran it by the backers. No go. The creative control was questionable....but I would be in the film...and would get money. I got up and walked (Linda pushed my chair) out as he yelled, "be reasonable! be realistic!". Funny, what they called being reasonable in fact is not being realistic...that is, it is not the way to get things done.

In a few days, I got a letter from his lawyer saying I couldn't use the ideas in my outline because his writers had created a script from it. I made a mental note to produce everything myself and I was up for making a film so I wrote a totally different story. I made it for $300! To this date, all my films have made money! Now that's realistic!

On one hand, I never set out to make something about "disability". The three years of doing relationship counseling taught me that everybody has to deal with the same set of problems, issues, challenges, false myths, etc...although we tell ourselves, because we are told, our problems, etc. are special (one of those false myths). Things like disability, race, gender, etc. just make the universal problems, etc. more obvious (There maybe some special physical problems...such as getting up a curb or how to make love comfortably if you have a rigid back...but practical physical solutions, such as ramps, take care of these). In my art I always go after the universal problems, using the flashlight of obviousness(?) that my body gives me as a digging tool. So **FAIRYTALES CAN COME TRUE** is about a dumb guy who thinks he is ugly. This guy is so dumb that he doesn't see when a girl likes him. Yes, I played the guy and yes, it is biographical. I was so dumb that nude women actually climbed in my bed...and I thought they just wanted to chat...so I just chatted! In the video, my crusty, rude, lewd, English, fairy godfather appears and is fed up with what a wimp I am. He pushes me to drop my bad self-image and attitudes and to dress brightly, to let the girl who I just met do things for/with me. Like magic, she leaves her jock boyfriend for me.

On the other hand, when I act in a film, that puts a layer of "disability" into the film (unless I'm playing a creature from another reality). Then, that layer plays with the other levels. In high school in Special Ed class, they showed us explicit how-to sex films. But that always missed the real burning

issue...how to get a relationship in which sex could be....again, a universal problem. This is at what I aimed **FAIRYTALES**.

When I was making **FAIRYTALES**, I was still kind of under the false assumption that for a film to be seen, it has to be up to "technical quality standards"...which requires a lot of money, equipment and arcane skills so I thought I was making a rough draft to show to people to get money to make the real film. We shot it on super-8 film, then transferred it onto video so I could edit it myself. All of which were big no-no's quality-wise. People in the know kept telling me it was a waste of time...too bad quality (The same people have since commissioned me to do videos of similar quality!) but I was making a film my way, with no need to compromise.

When it was done, I sent it to Multi-Media Resource Center of San Francisco, CA...which was the biggest distributor of sex education material. I though they would give me feedback...maybe even put me in contact with someone to back "the real film". To my surprise, they wanted to distribute it as is. They said it was the first film that focused with a lusty humor on the "disabled" building relationships and self-image...not as special problems, but just as a part of living.

The debateable technical quality has not disabled **FAIRYTALES**. It has been on cable, has been shown in different countries...**THE PLAYBOY CHANNEL** even wanted to aired it but **FAIRYTALES** was disabled from reaching the audience of disabled teens and young adults (I have always thought if I had seen such a film as **FAIRYTALES** in my teens, it would have cut out many years of me thinking I was ugly and a burden...many years of not realizing I was cute, sexy and desirable). It wasn't even the love scenes...places which rented sexually explicit (very much more explicit than **FAIRYTALES**) did not rent **FAIRYTALES**. I found out what was happening when I made personal appearances in conjunction with the showing of the film at high school Special Ed classes, hospitals, sheltered workshops, colleges, day care centers, etc... What always happened was the disabled audiences loved it, got excited, got inspired, got the courage to take risks to go after what they wanted in their lives...to try, to hope. This even happened at a sheltered art workshop with mostly mentally retarded people who weren't following the plot...but were bopping along to the rock soundtrack (Roy Orbison, the Everly Brothers, Sonny and Cher, etc.)....and after the film, they mobbed me, touching me as one of them who was a movie star.

What happened most times was after the film, the professional (the person in charge) or a parent would take me aside and express their concerns about the film building "false hopes" (an interesting concept...can hope ever be harmful?). My stock answer was all the cast except one (the guy who played "the jock boyfriend") in their real lives happen to be in relationships in which one of the two were disabled...with kids! (Not to mention that the disabled people's real jobs were things like city planner, teacher, etc...) so how was I to know the hopes, the expectations, the excitement that the film raised were "false"? Of course, facts and the scene in the film of the well-meaning but over-protective mother did not change the attitudes of these well-meaning but over-protective people and in most institutional situations, these are the buyers/renters of educational films for the disabled, not the disabled themselves. So **FAIRYTALES** was rarely rented/bought/shown in the disabled context....although it did find an audience in the art world.

Before I leave **FAIRYTALES**, there is another telling example of not only what disabled **FAIRYTALES**, but of the dynamic of censorship. In 1988, I lectured and led a performance exercise in Stu Kandell's Drama Therapy class at Antioch College, San Francisco. After that class, Stu invited me to do a presentation at the "drama" class he was teaching at the Oakland Cerebral Palsy Center. The group consisted of 30 people from 20 years old on up who were shipped daily from homes or institutions to the center. They had various kinds and degrees of disabilities...few as "severe" as me...making you wonder why they were stuck in the day care world. They were sitting in a circle when Stu, Linda and I got there. They seemed to be pretty dulled out. We and their regular teacher (who, I learned later, was new to the job) tried to pull them out...with very little success...although Linda and I being together made a great impact...they couldn't believe we were "lovers", that she wasn't my sister. Then I showed them **FAIRYTALES**. I rarely have seen such a transformation. They became alive. After the film, they wanted to talk...even the ones who usually rarely talk. One woman said, "my sister always tells me don't want boyfriends because I'll get hurt...but I don't care if I get hurt...I want a boyfriend!". They wouldn't shut up even when it was time for us to go so the teacher, excited about what had happened to her students, invited me back. She called me a week later, though, very disappointed. Her boss told her under no circumstances should I come back. He had gotten complaints from the families and institutions about how "the clients" were much harder to manage (control) after my visit. The teacher's mistake was thinking she was there to teach rather than to baby sit.

1981-present = Numerous videos, live performances, radio shows, publications, film, lectures, and magazine articles.

* * *

Let us start with some definitions. "Chero" is the physical life energy. I created the word "chero" by combining "chi" and "eros". Magic is the science/art of non-linear change. In cherotic magic, it is the practical focus of the person to reshape reality into more humane forms by using the magical dynamics of relationships.

For over 25 years, I have been exploring what I call tanpanic trances. In this magical experiment, the first "new" form of play to be drawn from the veil of sex was "eroplay". Eroplay is intense non-linear physical touching, rubbing, licking, exploring for physical pleasure for its own sake. Eroplay is foreplay which is released from the linear goals of reaching genital orgasm. Eroplay extends well into the everyday communication exchange between you and the rest of the world.

This is the real meaning when somebody says everything you do, every communication, is sexual. This real meaning is hidden. The second it is revealed, by using the word sexual, it herds us back into the accepted, life-denying, controlled channels of relating. Instead, we should say everything you do is cherotic. Eroplay is for communicating, for getting to know, to reveal, to exchange, to be vulnerable, to play, to enjoy, to explore. For this reason, eroplay, even at its most intense naked physical play can be done with anybody you like and enjoy...can be done in

clarity in even social situations once it has been clearly and purposefully taken out of the usual sexual context.

Romantic monogamy, celibacy, and sexual sex all hide this primal channel of satisfying successfully these needs of play, exploring, and communicating... Hide by misdirecting these needs into channels which are not capable of satisfying, or even holding, these types of living needs. The result of this is frustration, isolation, and draining the energy of creation away from the personal level along with personal responsibility. In short, the result is life-denial being created by the dimension of power.

Eroplay is only one of the states of physical trance long hidden within sex by the life-denial of power. Each state has its own aspects, nature and effects. Each state is complete within itself, although one state may contain the other states within its special context. For example, sex contains eroplay, as foreplay, within it but there is not a linear ladder. That is, eroplay should not be seen as a step towards sex, something less than sex. If you look at eroplay and sex in this way, the true qualities of both will be hidden from you.

Orgasm as the physical sensation can be located in each of the body centers, including the skin. Each center has its own special effect so where an orgasm occurs has its own magical effect and context. Moreover, when we realize it is possible to feel an orgasm in different centers, or even all of the centers, at the same time, we begin to see that even orgasmic sex is a much more rich and complex experience. This is not the place to go into these orgasmic sexual states in detail but it should be again pointed out that genital orgasmic sex, especially when it includes intercourse, is suited only for long-term living relationships when done within the normal social and cultural frame. This is because of the bonding pattern this sets off in the brain.

"Ontonse" is the fairly regular level of implosion of cherotic energy into the body during eroplay. Cherotic energy is the non-linear stream of the subatomic packets which our body breathes in and out through every center of the body. Ontonse can be physically as intense as an orgasm but because it is a level implosion of chero, rather than a peak explosion as the orgasm is, it can last much longer than the orgasm. Its effects are different that orgasm. Ontonse can arc between two eroplaying bodies, creating a united body during the trance time without genital intercourse.

When ontonse occurs on a regular basis, eroplay has been transformed into "tanplay". Since you can not work linearly toward having an ontonse as you can to some degree work toward having an orgasm in sex, you can only enter the tanplay state by enjoying play for itself, enjoying being with the other person just for being with that person. Then, the state of tanplay will settle in. Tanplay is a state of close friends... Warm, slow and gentle...Willing to go anywhere the tanplay takes you. Because the ontonse arcs into the body, it can effect people not physically within the tanplay. A lot of the formal cherotic magic takes place within this tanplay trance. Tanplay is serious folly.

There are at least two other physical trances that I use in the work. In one of these states, "tansex", orgasm has not the linear goal peak quality it has in sex. In tansex, both orgasm and ontonse are just two of the many possible ports that the play may carry the ritual into. Tansex, although it can be intense, has a magical evenness to it. Everything has an equal value. If there appears a linear goal such as to have an orgasm, this transforms tansex into some other trance state with different effects. Tansex has a non-linear relaxed floating quality of things just happening following the playing without forcing or trying. As in the other physical trance play forms (other than sex) that we have been talking about, there is no genital intercourse within tansex. The effect of tansex in the normal reality is to express and to explore the depth of a long existing friendship. Because of this, it only makes sense to be in tansex only within a friendship which has lasted for two years.

This is within the normal western cultural reality. During the apprenticeship or in a ritual performance, however, tansex is a powerful ritual. Within the magical work of apprenticeship, as in all magical work, another reality is working under the surface. Within this cave of lila, the shaman works with these altered states of physical trance, without the limits of morals, for different magical non-linear change, in a totally different non-individualistic context than the normal cultural context. We will call this context "tanpan".

Within tanpan, all of the aspects of this physical/play trance, including that of intercourse, are drained of both their normal and hidden meanings and qualities, so that they can be used by the magic through the shaman to effect both local and non-local changes.

We have just examined some of the channels of cherotic breathing which have been hidden from us within the so-called sexual level. It is the same on all of the levels of living. We have been led to believe that there are at most only a few ways to experience instinct, to physically communicate, to love and feel and speak and listen and think, to be spiritual, to breathe with the whole web of ultimate reality. By being denied the awareness of these other ways, our erour, our vulnerable strength, is taken away from us. We are funneled down into a narrow existence, most of which is abstract. These many ways, many channels, of cherotic breathing are in reality fragmentary parts of the whole tanpanic experience, direct experience of reality, the primal experience. This total

experience is deep love. Enjoying playing unlocks every possibility.

Schechner defines performance as "ritualized behavior conditioned (and) permeated by play". We should always remember that at the root, the student comes to the teacher, the audience comes to the performance, the person comes to the bodyplay to be deeply and intimately with a flesh-and-blood person or a group of flesh-and-blood people in a way that is usually denied to her in normal polite social life. She comes for touching, holding, rocking, playing, having fun, and healing. This has been usually forgotten under rigid serious rituals, techniques and theories. Again, western medicine is a prime example of this forgetting but even spiritual methods of healing in our culture have put the rituals and techniques over the playing and fun.

This is why, before we get into the techniques of chero bodyplay, we have to be clear about what we are doing. By doing the apprenticeship, by doing performances, by doing bodyplay, we are calling forth the liminal state of controlled folly. Controlled folly is liminal because it is a combination of the awake reality and dream reality. Rituals make this combination possible.

In the state of controlled folly, the activities of playing and creating fun are intensified and expanded, because rituals take the place of the normal rules, taboos, fears, and inhibitions. This makes it possible to go into the unknown where anything is possible. Ritual is what makes this magical playing safe by giving the playing a living, breathing structure. Playing is only possible within a structure but when ritual becomes important in itself, rigid and serious, it starts limiting and killing the play and fun. So it is important to remember that the ritual is just the channel of the play and fun.

Playing is a primal state in which things are drained temporarily of their normal meanings. Life goals for a time fade in importance in this state. Tensions and stresses of normal life are safely transmuted into creativity. In play, newness appears. This newness is translated into inspiration, into new ideas, new ways of doing things. The young, both in the higher animals and humans, learn the most through the state of play. Both man and the higher animals use play to transform violent energy into safe acting out. The human mind and civilization were evolved by playing.

In "bodyplay", chero is aroused by playing with the body. Fun is created and released by this play into the world directly. Fun is energy focused upon itself, rather than upon some goal. The fun we are talking about in this work is a deep, intense fun that corrects imbalances and induces newness. This kind of fun comes from risk-taking and work. This deep fun feels very different from the surface, light, fast fun of the world of politeness, glamour, romance, and social rules. We should always remember that at the root, the student comes to the teacher, the audience comes to the performance, the person comes to the bodyplay to be deeply and intimately with a flesh-and-blood person or a group of flesh-and-blood people in a way that is usually denied to her in normal polite social life. She comes for touching, holding, rocking, playing, having fun, and healing. This has been usually forgotten under rigid serious rituals, techniques and theories. Again, Western medicine is a prime example of this forgetting. Even spiritual methods of healing in our culture have put the rituals and techniques over the playing and fun.

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Through bodyplay, erour is slowly reached by calling forth chero in all parts of the body by eroplaying. This is true not only in the "receiver," but also in the "healer." Moreover, through the energy released through these magical sessions, a collective social erour is gradually created for the general world. This is the ultimate reason for this work. The chero released as focused fun "writes" upon the place in which this magical play is performed. It transforms the place into a magical site. The more play is done in a place, the more chero is stored in the physical site. The more chero that is contained in a physical site, the easier it is to perform more intense play.

Cherotic bodyplay releases, frees, creates new possibilities. This is true for the people who are actually directly playing together. This is also true for the society, the people, the world, the outer reality surrounding the eroplaying people. This makes bodyplay not just an individual problem-solving therapy. Instead, it is a playful but powerful ritual that has effects on many different levels. There is a danger in focusing too much on what it will do for the individual, how it will affect his life, what does it mean in terms of his life, how it will help him. This kind of focus can turn bodyplay into encouraging individualism which keeps the person in the prison of fragmentation.

To be successful, bodyplay has to be intensely personal between the playing people, but should not be individualistic. It should not push the people inward onto their "selves." Bodyplay should expand them outward into others.

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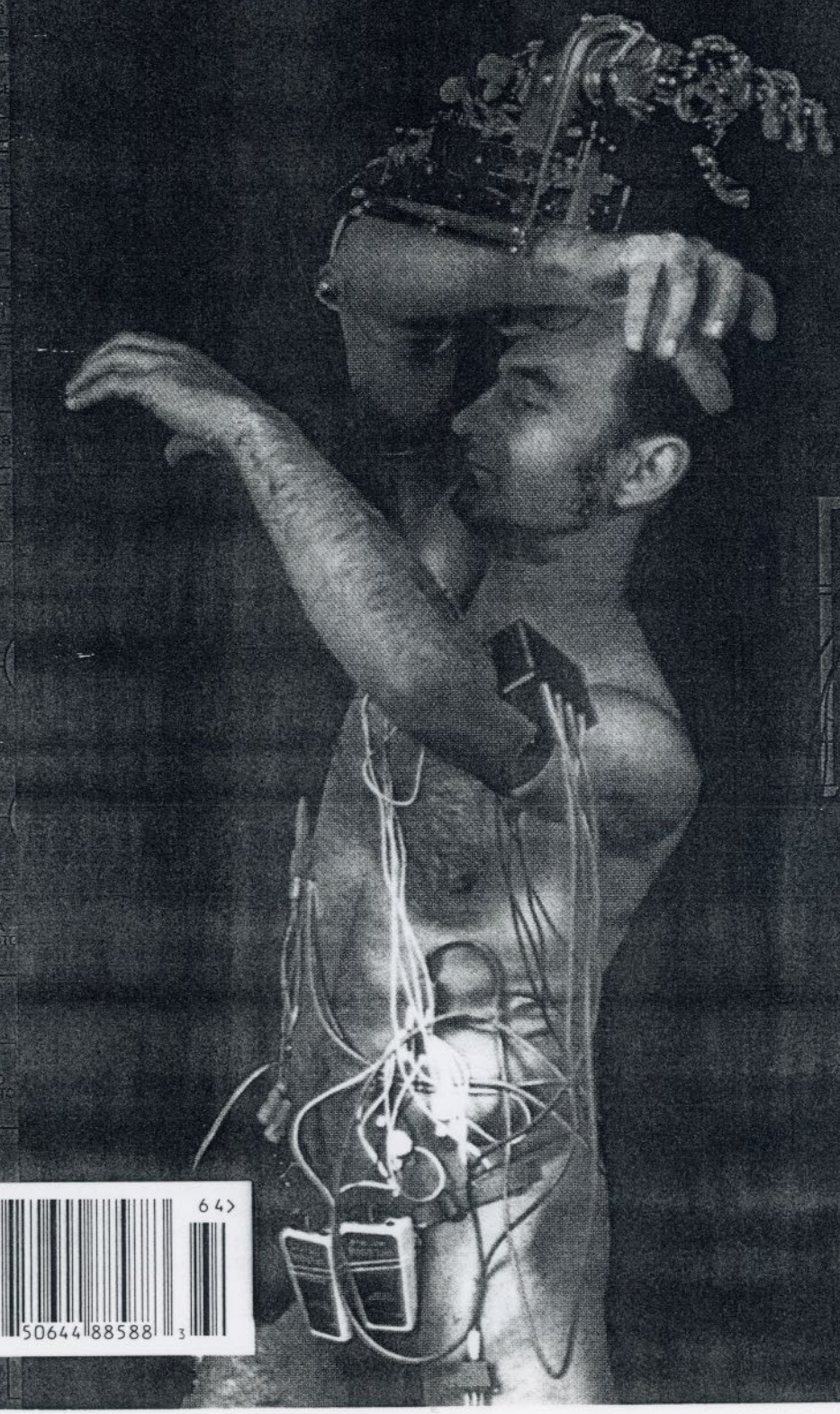

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THE COMBINE PLOT THICKENS:

all power to the sensualist neo-shaman anti-fascist magicians

Thu, 30 May 1996
From: Frank Moore <fmoore@lanminds.com>
To: fmoore@lanminds.com

Well, gang...i'm blown out, am cracking up...i have heard everything now. i recycle my writings...cut them up to use the ideas. Remember that i sent out THE COMBINE PLOT 96 a few months ago as a response to the telecom bill? It was really a part of a larger piece. I cut out the last half of the old piece...in that half i talked about how a certain asshole director of a performance festival was trying to force me to mutilate/censor my performance...yeah,' right! i finally did the performance there uncensored...and THE COMBINE PLOT was published in a lot of art magazines. That was 90.

Guess who called today. The asshole! Guess why he was calling. He is creating a website for the festival....and he wants to put THE COMBINE PLOT, along with "other scholarly papers," on the site!

Here's the second half. Can you tell me why he wants to put this on his site?

I am a slow typist. As I write this, events have overtaken me. The combine has struck again with its remote control of fear and with its drugs of bigness and money. The Cleveland Public Theater Performance Art Festival had invited me to do my *Journey to Lila* ritualistic piece with audience participation. Two weekends before I was to perform, the city's vice squad sat in on the festival's show of Annie Sprinkle and made it clear that if she did certain things which are regular parts of her art, she and the director of the festival would be arrested. For personal, practical reasons, Annie decided to change her act.

We should be outraged that the vice squad came. We should be outraged against the government undercover spying on art and theater, against the use of a bad law in a manner it was not intended, against what makes it impossible for us to see truly free art and theater in this festival. There was a lot of pressure on me from the festival director to not be unreasonable, to give up control of the art over to some political game.

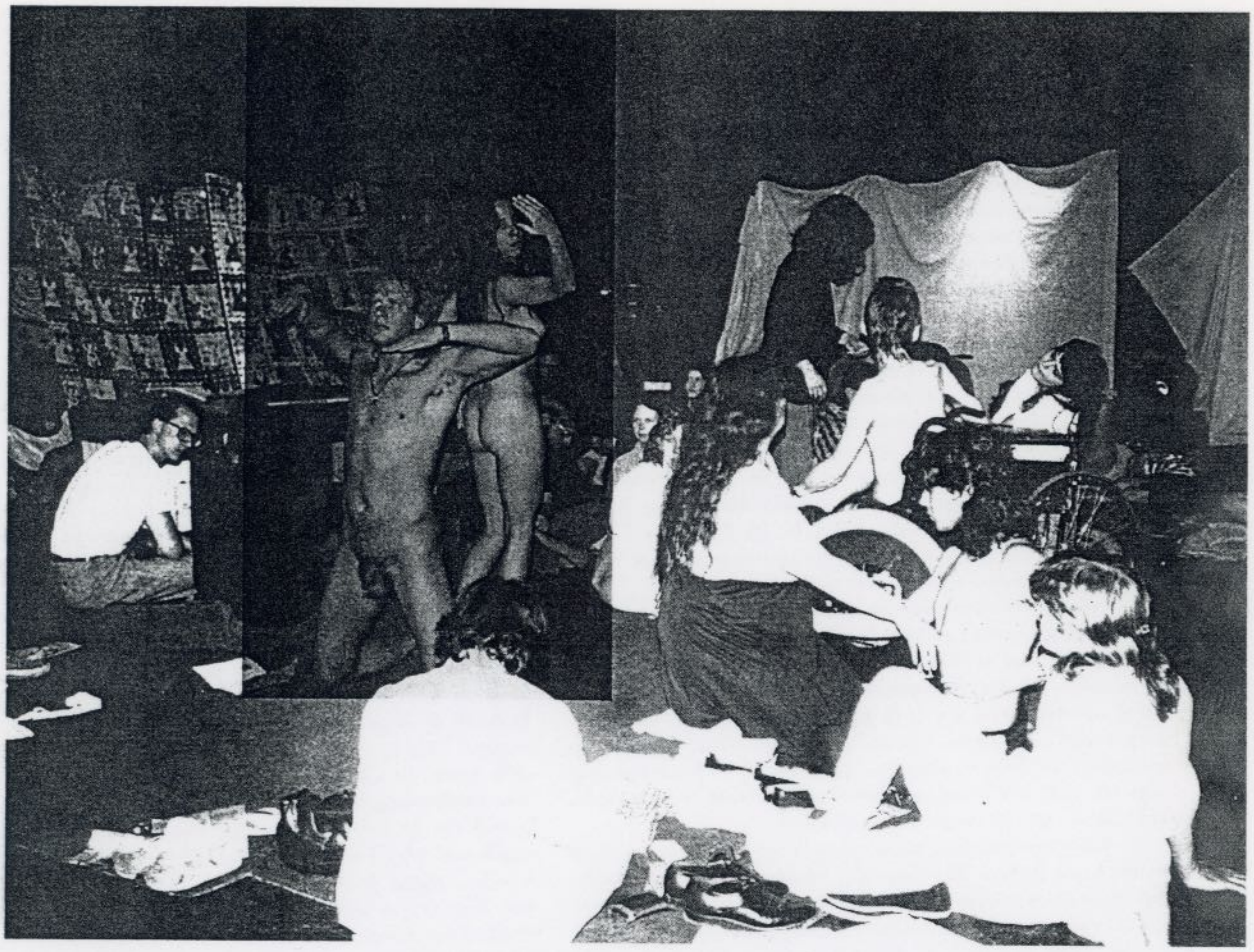
(I need to make a distinction between the festival and the Cleveland Public Theatre. The festival is an event that takes place at the theatre for two months, once a year. The festival director, Tom Mulready, is not a regular member of the theatre organization's staff. Any references here to the festival and/or its director refer only to the festival and its director and do not reflect in any way on the Cleveland Public Theatre or its director and staff. I found the Cleveland Public Theatre Director and staff to be a great example of what a group of people can do when they are committed to art.)

The law was used in a very strange way. The law says performers and their audience cannot touch one another on certain so-called erogenous zones. In ritualistic audience participatory performances in general and in my work in particular, this prohibition destroys any hope of doing the work. As I write this, I do not have copies of all of Cleveland's laws that are wrongly being applied to works of art. I do not know if there are laws in Cleveland against nudity in performance. But it is clear it is not possible for me to do the art without getting arrested or seriously compromising the integrity of the art. I am not willing to do this. I am willing to be arrested for the art.

I would understand if the director did not want to get arrested along with my company. After all, the curator in Cincinnati is facing a possible five-year sentence for having the Mapplethorpe exhibition. Most people do not have that kind of courage. If that was the fear, I would have created with the festival an artistic protest against the law that would have neither broken the law nor compromised.

But it was not fear of arrest, but the fear of losing funding, fear of how the festival would look, fear of inconvenience. The focus was how to protect the festival, its size, its importance, its financial health. What was right for the art was forgotten. In fact, both the art and the artist became nuisances to be dealt with, to be sacrificed. After all, it was stated by the director that he, Mulready, is not Martin Luther King. King, Jefferson, Gandhi, and all of the artists and just plain folk who broke unjust laws in order to evolve things to a better place are turning over in their graves. This is one of the main functions of art. It was stated by Mulready that it is impossible to present in Cleveland what is presented in big cities such as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco ... but we have also done the same performances in small cities such as Denver, Buffalo, and Rochester.

He said it as if this situation is acceptable, if regrettable, in the Midwest. This attitude places the festival in the role of being the agent of the established order, rather than on the side of change. I was told by Mulready that this kind of art would be shown privately in Cleveland. But the festival could not be remotely linked to it unless the art is mutilated to fit the status quo. I kept being told to think of what the festival gives me and the other artists in terms of money and exposure. I should not blow it. What is forgotten in all of this is if the art is not intact, if the content of art is not firmly in the hands of the artists, then artists, art festivals, art galleries and theaters, and even art itself will become just window-



Journey to Lila, a performance by Frank Moore, April 1990. Cleveland Performance Art Festival. Photo by Linda Mac

dressing for the established order. I am thinking of the artists. If I gave up control of the art directly or indirectly either to the vice squad or this festival, I would be putting a frame of untruth around the artists and the audiences of the Festival. I will not do that.

After two days of pressuring me to change my performance, Mulready suddenly reversed his position. He did not do it from a flash of integrity, but because he was getting pressure from both inside the Cleveland Public Theatre and the national art community. I did the performance as it was originally created without incident.

The combine plot has Mulready hooked on the drug of bigness, on the funding habit. In our talks on the crisis over my performance, things were talked about in terms of how big the festival was, how the funding could not be risked now that the Festival has reached this level of size and importance. Hidden within this is the pacemaker of fear that the combine can use by remote control. This drug of bigness is why, to get N.E.A. money, artists are signing what amounts to a loyalty oath to the established order, agreeing to not do patently offensive work.

It is easy to get hooked on the drug of bigness, as I found out when I received an N.E.A. fellowship for $5,000 in the early 80's. I had been doing art, performance and theater for about ten years with little or no money. So the N.E.A. money was just extra money. I soon noticed the work shifted from human-intensive to a more money-intensive focus. This shift was slight because I work on a small grassroots scale. But the scale began to expand. In a way, this expanding scale was fun, exciting, glamorous. But the change did not organically come from the art. Moreover, as my N.E.A. year drew to a close, I became more and more anxious about where I would get more money, thinking about applying for more grants, worrying about what I could not do if I did not get more grants. All of this took away from the art. It made me much more vulnerable to compromise, much more likely to become a part of the combine. The old richness of possibilities and alternatives began to dry up, being funneled into a possibility of grants. One day I began to wonder how I could have done art for all those years, and now I was full of fear. I decided to not play the grant game.

If this addiction can happen to an artist like me, who operates on the small scale, I can only imagine what a temptation of addiction someone like the festival director, Mulready, has to cope with. But when the drug of bigness and fear of losing funds compromise art, it is time to protest ... it is time to bring it all back down to the basic core of the artistic experience which is the art coming directly through the artist to the society without any censoring influences, so that art can cause evolution in the society. It is extremely dangerous when artists sign loyalty oaths to the established order to become paid agents, when art festivals and galleries

find it acceptable for vice squads to spy on art and theater, to use blue laws to forbid art.

To fight back this full-scale attack on creative expression, the attack that may surpass that of the McCarthy era, we artists must be willing to make sacrifices to become independent of the combine. Many galleries and performance companies have died when their grants were cut. This is because bigness and money-intensive art which grants promote drain possibilities from us, blind us to the possibilities that are outside the combine. It has become increasingly important for us artists to start devolving art back to the human personal scale and away from high-tech mass bigness. This devolution will create alternatives that our society needs, and which is the function of art.

I usually perform at grassroots spaces which have created independent alternatives to the combine. For example, Karen Briede ran a multi-level visual and performance gallery in Denver. She brought in nationally known but controversial artists by using the money she made in her hair salon. She was always selling art to her hair clients. She now is having nationally important exhibitions in her apartment in Chicago. In Seattle, A.F.L.N. (A FLIMSY LACE NIGHTIE) is doing the same thing by being a coffee house during the day and a gallery by night.

In these and other similar small places, cutting-edge art finds homes because people like Karen personally take risks for the art. But as Martha Wilson of FRANKLIN FURNACE has shown, it is possible for established galleries to show controversial art. It is extremely important that both artists and art administrators be willing to lose everything, including funding, in order to save freedom. This is the only way we will win back our full freedom from the combine, take back our full range of possibilities.

I want to close this by quoting from a letter from Kyle Griffith, an author. The Combine "is counting on the majority of creative people to stay on the sidelines until the anti-art movement gains real support among the general public, saying 'Well, my work isn't that controversial, so why should I take the trouble to support a bunch of really hard-core people who are deliberately asking for trouble from the blue noses, anyway?' The combine plot "encourages consumer art while discouraging all art forms that turn the consumers of art into artists themselves. What people like you are REALLY being attacked for is drawing the audience, the art consumer, into the creative process."

Date: Fri, 31 May 1996
From: Barbara Golden <barb@c2.org>
To: Frank Moore <fmoore@lanminds.com>
cc: fmoore@lanminds.com

go frankie.

WIGband found out years ago, that there was no use applying to play in major art venues, and have to defend our work. it was much easier to rent a space and have total freedom. then we got asked a bunch of times to do openings and so forth, but the act of having to write a proposal to do our performances was anathema to us.

Date: Tue, 4 Jun 1996
From: keith848@sirius.com (Keith Hennessy)
To: Frank Moore <fmoore@lanminds.com>

Frank

I've been enjoying your e writings and have been sending them along to other freedom spirited artists and activists. I'm disappointed that you're calling Thomas Mulready an asshole. He is no big art dealer. He's produced all of the controversial artists he can afford including many of our visionary kinky taboo breaking friends. Including me and you. He is making different choices than you or I about how to survive during this anti-art wartime. And he may play some games that you think are more destructive than healthy. In my opinion he's more ally than asshole. Not just an ally of mine but of performance artists in general and controversial sexual liberationists most of all. When I was in Cleveland, most of the African-American theater's staff (Karamu house) wanted to close me down before we opened because in my show about racism and homophobia I pulled a text — inside a condom — from a naked man's butt. A white queer writer from the alternative press called me a racist colonialist because I was going to collaborate with a black gay man from Cleveland. I felt severely unwelcome. Thomas backed me all the way. I changed my piece because I went to Cleveland to be in a conversation with a community of people. I ignored the petty attack by the writer and focused on meeting with the mostly Christian black staff at Karamu. Several of them came to my show because I took out the nudity. I am a community-based artist who makes site specific work. In Cleveland the site included the community I was performing in. I adapted my work to the environment. I told the audience during the show about the changes I made and why I made them. I challenged the edges and my work changed people. It was a major personal success for me. Thomas sat with me in intense meetings. He never asked me to back down. He tried to protect his ass and he respected every move I made.

That is my experience and I respect Thomas for all that. And I just wanted you to add this story to your accumulated information about him. Thanks for reading.

Keith Hennessy

Date: Tue, 04 Jun 1996
From: Frank Moore <fmoore@lanminds.com>
To: Keith Hennessy <keith848@sirius.com>
CC: fmoore@lanminds.com

i just call 'em as i see 'em.

Date: Fri, 07 Jun 1996
From: Frank Moore <fmoore@lanminds.com>
To: Keith Hennessy <keith848@sirius.com>

Keith, more thoughts:

Maybe the bottom line reason why I don't let outside forces/pressures dictate the form or the content of the art is because I do not see myself as the creator of the art, but the servant to the art. One of my functions as a servant is being

the bodyguard to the art. I am just following the evolution of the art. I don't really know what an element, image, aspect magically does. I trust that each is there for a host of reasons. So I sit back and watch the interplay and the organic change in the art. I don't feel it is my place to tamper with the art out of reasons of convenience or politics. This is just my personal philosophy of art.

But on the practical level:

It is one thing to create a performance especially for a certain site, event, or audience; or change the performance within [and based on] the dance of you, the art, the audience, the space, and whatever else.

It is a totally different thing to change a piece because of pressure from a censor, an offended person, or a timid producer. The changing of a piece under pressure sets up all kinds of bad and very dangerous precedents, and sends all kinds of bad, dangerous, misleading messages. It says a piece of art is not a united whole, but just a collection of bits of business not really important; so there is no big deal in taking some of the bits out. This is like saying a poem is a collection of words so you can take out the certain offending words and read the poem. It is no longer the poem [probably not even a poem]. People, the community, have been denied the real poem, the real experience. And they are being denied the knowledge of poetry/art.

Moreover, if we change art because of outside pressure, we are saying people have the right to not be offended, to not be made uncomfortable; that it's bad and harmful when art and life offends them. This so-called reasonableness and being careful and staying within the lines becomes the standard order: "be reasonable, change the art!" And then we wonder why someone like Jesse Helms gets started! It seems to me that one of our functions as artists is to make it clear that people can live without censoring limits.

Finally, I have never found that the offended people and censors represent the community. They really look down on the community. In Cleveland, after I spent a week in an intense fight to get the actual performance to the community, the community was hungry for it! It was my largest audience for that kind of long ritual performance: over a hundred people who very actively participated, causing the performance to last over six hours. The censors always sell the people short, looking down on the people. I think artists should keep the control over the content and the form of the art within the art; not surrender the control over to the government, the galleries, the backers, or any pressure group. We as artists owe that to the art, to the people, and to other artists.

Date: Sat, 8 Jun 1996
From: keith848@sirius.com (Keith Hennessy)
To: Frank Moore <fmoore@lanminds.com>

Journey to Lila, a performance by Frank Moore, April 1990. Cleveland Performance Art Festival. Photo by Linda Mac

Frank

Thanks for excellent articulation.

I am inspired by your commitment to the art, the image, the magic. I too see myself as servant to the image and to the audiences/communities/peoples.

Censors and producers and leaders in general are more conservative and afraid than the people they (claim to) speak for. Nonetheless there are many people who identify with the censors. I think that artists can make choices about who they are including within the sphere of influence of a given work. Collaborating with the fears and projections of a community is like a risky dance on shaky ruins. The potential for beauty is everywhere and inviting.

Like most body-based artists I work the edges, not the centers. I seek the "resilient edge of resistance°;" the place where stretching or reshaping the boundary is possible. This is, of course, located differently for different folks.

All power to the sensualist neo-shaman anti-fascist magicians all power to you and me and performance artists everywhere.

Keith

° *a quote from Chester Mainard*

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10 11th Anniversary issue

the past, present and future of performance arts

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Laffin at Colonial Arcade
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BIGGER ISN'T BETTER:
Perspectives On The Cleveland Performance Art Festival

BY FRANK GREEN

The email correspondence between Keith Hennessy and Frank Moore published in *P-Form* #42 provided contrasting views of Cleveland Performance Art Festival director Thomas Mulready. To Hennessy, Mulready is an ally of controversial artists; to Moore, he's a censor and megalomaniac. Both characterizations are partially true but incomplete, as I've learned over the past ten years as a Cleveland-based artist and critic. In my opinion, Mulready is essentially a supporter of controversial work who has sometimes attempted to suppress creative expression because of an exaggerated emphasis on promoting quantity. In his quest to produce "the largest festival of performance art in the world," he sometimes tried to reduce difficult work to more palatable forms in order to market the largest number of artists profitably.

My own work was featured in the Performance Art Festival (PAF) four years in a row. Mulready worked hard to produce an annual event that provided emerging artists like me with a context in which to present work, and for that I am grateful. The annual opportunity to perform enabled me to expand my work in scale and ambition. Then in 1992 he asked me to alter my work to fit the mold of the festival. Like Frank Moore, I refused, and our relationship has been strained ever since.

I was working with sexual content that year, but I wasn't asked to change my work for that reason. Mulready was opposed to my performance's length: at ninety minutes, it didn't fit conveniently into an evening with three artists on the bill. This was not an infrequent request. Dan Kwong, a Los Angeles artist sharing the bill, had agreed to present a portion of a longer work. If the PAF had been smaller – if there were one or two artists a night, instead of three or four – neither of us would have been placed in this situation.

My work is tightly constructed and cumulative in its effect; it doesn't excerpt well. I've always been more concerned with the integrity of my work than with career considerations, and I wouldn't compromise. I insisted on performing the piece in its entirety, aware that I was alienating a producer who had helped my career. Since then, I seem to be blacklisted. Though I was curated into the festival more often than any other artist in the country, I've been routinely omitted from the various survey videos and histories produced by the PAF.

Moore is correct to call Mulready a censor if he was asked to alter the content of his work, but this was an atypical request. The PAF presented uncensored many artists whose work had been censored by others due to sexual content, including Tim Miller, Karen Finley, and Holly Hughes. Indeed, Mulready has always recognized the market potential of sex. Whenever an artist like Hennessy, Moore, Annie Sprinkle, or Kate Bornstein appeared in the PAF, he emphasized the sexual content of their work, whether or not this was its most interesting aspect. When a gay or lesbian artist appeared, he advertised their sexual preference, even when, as in the case of John Fleck, the artist didn't consider this relevant.

Moore is exactly right when he attributes Mulready's attempts to suppress aspects of certain artworks to "the drugs of bigness and money." The PAF is structured on a philosophy of "bigger is better," and this emphasis on quantity over quality has many problems. In addition to reducing some important work to a lower common denominator, it's had detrimental effects on performance artists in Cleveland. Ironically, the presence of "the largest performance art festival in the universe" has actually decreased opportunities for local performance artists, and critical discourse on performance has been discouraged.

I moved to Cleveland from New York in 1988 after performing for ten years in East Village clubs like the Pyramid, Limbo Lounge, and Club 57. When I got here, I found a thriving community of performance artists, including performance poets Kristen Ban Tepper and Amy Sparks, sound/text artists Luigi Bob Drake and Jordan Davis, new music composers Dennis Maxfield and Temple Jack Orchestra, feminist performer Arlene Hartman, the conceptual action collectives Reasonablism and Knectiv, multimedia collectives the Subliminals and Nova Lizard Project, process performers Andrew Kaletta, Laila Voss, Bruce Edwards, and Thaddeus Root, visual performers Matt and Cynthia Cupach, and many others.

I began to perform on bills with these artists. Artist-organized performances occurred frequently in galleries, storefronts, and warehouses. Time-based artists also collaborated with visual artists on guerrilla activities and outdoor events. All this activity took place with no funding beyond an occasional small admittance fee. Publicity consisted of word-of-mouth, college radio announcements, and Xeroxed flyers. There were no proposal forms or curatorial committees, as there are in the PAF. Everyone participated equally. We collaborated often and encouraged each other to experiment and take risks. Local nightclubs like Artichoke and Pat's and Babylon-a-Go-Go began to book local performance artists. It was like the East Village on a smaller scale.

Local artists were also curated into venues offering payment and technical facilities, like Cleveland Public Theater and the nationally known artist-run gallery Spaces, both of which had been promoting regional and touring performance artists for almost a decade. In its first year (1988), the PAF was a gathering of mostly local and regional artists at Cleveland Public Theater, with a few national acts thrown in. In addition to being the organizer, Mulready was a partici-

pating artist, working with the collaborative group Music Movement And.

Over the next ten years, the PAF grew into a well-known national presenter. Mulready stopped performing his own work after the third year; the festival itself became his performance. Hyping each act to the audience in elaborate introductions, spouting sound bites and catch phrases in promotional videos, he became the Ed Sullivan of performance art, introducing Cleveland to a broad range of contemporary practitioners. Featuring twenty to forty artists and collectives a year, the PAF promoted a lot of important work. Audiences in many mid-sized cities have seen Rachel Rosenthal and Annie Sprinkle, but few have had the opportunity to compare their work to that of a couple hundred of their peers. Artists from New York, London, Los Angeles, and Chicago were presented alongside colleagues from smaller cities across the country – San Francisco, Boston, Houston, Baltimore, Seattle, Miami, Columbus, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and everywhere in between.

But as the PAF grew, it absorbed more and more of the available resources in terms of funding, audiences, and publicity, until finally it was the only game in town. Cleveland Public Theater and Spaces now rarely program performance artists, and performance art in Cleveland's nightclubs is a thing of the past. Even the guerrilla activities and fly-by-night events that used to take place so frequently have disappeared. Instead, there's a single behemoth called the Performance Art Festival once a year, and it's an event at which local artists have become second-class citizens.

The transformation was gradual. In 1989, Karen Finley, Dario D'Ambrosi, and Paul Zaloom, and I were featured alongside equal numbers of local and national artists. In 1990, non-local artists out-numbered local artists by a ratio of three to one. By 1991, the ratio was five to one. Last year, it was ten to one; most local artists were relegated to the "performance open," an adjunct to the main body of the festival in which anyone who applies but doesn't make it through the selection process for featured artists is welcome to perform a piece lasting under a half hour, at their own expense and with minimal technical support.

Keith Hennessy photo by Mulready Enterprises

No other performance art presenter in the country gives such short shrift to local artists. Usually it's the other way around. P.S. 122 and Dixon Place give preference to New York artists. Highways in Los Angeles, Hallwalls in Buffalo, Randolph Street Gallery and N.A.M.E. Gallery in Chicago, Mobius in Boston, Diverseworks in Houston, the Lab in San Francisco, and Painted Bride in Philadelphia all focus on local performers. Some present regional artists almost exclusively, while others manage to balance area talent with national and international artists without creating a two-tiered system. For years, New York's Franklin Furnace was a model of this kind of balance.

William Pope L. photo by Paul Furtin

Because they are rarely given featured artist slots, and other venues in which to present work are now lacking, Cleveland artists end up applying to the PAF using videos from their work in the performance open. In this way, they're forced to compete with artists from out of town with work that has already been constrained in terms of length, complexity, and technical requirements. Even those who manage to get more elaborate work produced are disadvantaged. In 1994, I applied to the festival with The Scarlet Letters, a bodywork piece originally produced by Cleveland Public Theatre I was touring across the country. When members of the curatorial committee recommended the piece for the festival, Mulready vetoed the recommendation, saying that it had already been seen. Although other artists may come to town with previously performed and fully developed work, local artists, it seems, must create brand new pieces for the small fee offered.

Given this situation, I stopped applying to the PAF and found other presenters for my work. But I've been creating increasingly ambitious pieces for twenty years, and local theaters and galleries who don't generally produce performance art made an exception in my case. Most local artists aren't in this situation. They are emerging artists who need a context in which to experiment, or mid-career artists whose development has been stunted by lack of support. Over the ten year history of the festival, I'm the only local artist to have been featured more than twice. Some of the Cleveland-based artists I mentioned earlier, discouraged by repeated rejections from the PAF and the disappearance of other local opportunities, have moved away, or no longer perform.

I also happen to be a critic; for years I've reviewed visual artists for regional art journals and the local alternative press. After it became clear that I would no longer be participating in the PAF, my editors assigned me to write about it. I was glad to be able to offer critical attention to performance artists. As I knew from my own experience, serious criticism on performance is rare, especially for artists who work outside major cities like New York or Chicago. I wanted to help fill the void.

But criticism isn't always positive. Critical standards may vary, but some kind of gauge must exist, and, as a writer well versed in the history of performance, my standards are pretty high. Many of the artists I've written about met or surpassed them, but others did not. While I always tried to provide historical context and to explain why I thought certain artists were doing exemplary work, I took others to task for performing work I thought was self-indulgent, conceptually unsound, or technically sloppy.

One of these artists was Keith Hennessy. I'm the "white queer writer" Hennessy complains about in the previous issue of *P-Form*. In 1993, Mulready was presenting work at venues all over town. Hennessy, who is white, shared a bill at a primarily African American theater with William Pope.L, a black artist whose work I have followed closely over the years, and I was asked by Cleveland's alternative weekly *Free Times* to preview their work. Most of my article consisted of an analysis of Pope.L's work. Since I'd never seen Hennessy perform, all I could critique were statements he'd made to the press. Here's a portion of what I wrote:

"William Pope.L ups the ante considerably on performance artists addressing identity issues, many of whom approach complex subjects like race, gender, and sexuality with all the subtlety and sophistication of television talk show guests. He's spent years developing an aesthetic firmly grounded in his own identity as a black, heterosexual male, while simultaneously pushing the limits of this identity....

"In *Eracism*, Pope.L explores the vulnerability and invisibility of those labeled 'victims' by society. Crumbling the solidification of his own fertile words and tossing golf balls like so many ideas across space, he embodies a passionate plea for the primacy of the individual in a world of social groupings and celebrity stand-ins...

"Keith Hennessy comes from San Francisco 'as an anarchist and a pagan, as a post-bisexual fag in the queer 90s.' As if this were not enough minority status for a venue like Karamu House, Hennessy plans to 'co-create a portion' of his performance with someone as yet unnamed 'who is somehow more related to a local Cleveland community and is also some version of black or African and who's also queer.' This is so that 'the white artist wasn't the person showing up to introduce sexuality and politics into the conversation.'

"How typically colonial of the white guy, who assumes that black artists and audiences cannot broach these subjects without his help. It is one of the unfortunate side effects of multiculturalism that artists now feel free to advertise for the use of the underdog of their choice, while retaining creative control and star billing for themselves."

In retrospect, I think it was unfair of me to critique the strategies of an artist whose work I hadn't seen, and I wouldn't do it again. Though I still think my criticism is valid in that Hennessy was planning to use a person of another race to advance his own agenda, I wouldn't fault him if he wanted to debate my remarks. But that isn't what happened. Instead, he decided to ignore the substance of my critique in order to focus on personal emotions. He characterized my criticism as "petty," and four years later, he's still upset that I made him feel "unwelcome." But performance art isn't a social club. If they want to be taken seriously, artists must welcome critical discourse, even when it isn't positive.

Too many performance artists take what I call a community therapy approach to art – the idea that its function is to provide them with a way to vent about their personal problems and identities to audiences likely to be sympathetic. In this approach, there are no quality standards, and everyone is to be treated equally. If somebody's work is criticized, it's taken personally. After Hennessy's struggle with Karamu House management, which hadn't yet occurred when I wrote my article, I was attacked by writer Barry Daniels in the local gay press as a traitor to the cause of gay rights. My character and integrity were maligned; it was suggested that I was jealous of my subject. But community politics and personal attacks have no place in criticism; we should be talking about aesthetic issues and strategies.

In addition to critiquing individual artists, I wrote mixed reviews of the festival itself. For years, the uncurated performance open was a separate event, and provided a useful venue for little known artists to develop work. Beginning in 1995, Mulready began to mix emerging artists who had been selected through panel review with uncurated artists from the performance open on the same bill. Meanwhile, the number of "headline" artists doing more advanced work decreased.

Aside from being a convenient dumping ground for local performance artists, there are other problems with the performance open. Featured artists are accompanied by bad poets, mediocre dancers, wayward circus acts, and other lost souls. This anyone-can-do-it approach has a leveling effect on overall quality, making it difficult for audiences to develop the critical acumen necessary to appreciate more challenging artists, who in turn become increasingly rare.

When I voiced opinions like this in the local press, Mulready was often furious. He held my published writings up during his introductions and urged audiences to ignore them. Though he photocopies and distributes innocuous promotional pieces written by newspaper reporters, he suppressed my more sophisticated critiques, and badgered my editors to allow "younger" writers to cover the PAF. Clearly, it wasn't discourse he wanted, but promotion. But critical discourse is essential to the healthy development of any art form, and should be encouraged.

Unfortunately, there's no way for local artists to directly impact the structure or practices of the Performance Art Festival. Most of the national presenters I mentioned earlier are non-profit organizations with boards consisting of local artists who are involved in both overall decision making and the selection process for artists. The PAF is structured differently. There is no publicly accountable board of trustees; business decisions are made by Mulready. Artistic decisions are made by a selection panel appointed by Mulready which has often consisted of curators from out of town.

In any kind of monopoly, consumers and workers suffer. Cleveland audiences can no longer rely on other presenters for work that may not fit into the festival's mold, and Cleveland-based performers no longer have a choice of venues in which to develop work. If it intends to continue to absorb most of the resources, the PAF should do a better job of balancing the work of emerging performers with more ambitious pieces by midcareer artists, and should designate a larger number of its featured slots for local and regional practitioners. As things stand now, Ohio's performance artists are casualties of what Frank Moore so astutely refers to as "the combine plot."

Frank Green is a Ckevekand-based performer and writer.

Mainstream Avant-Garde?

BY FRANK MOORE

I suppose this is a review of sorts. Two things evoke this review. First, Martha Wilson of Franklin Furnace asked me to comment on the Furnace's plans. The second event was our going to a Karen Finley reading [which cost $3 as opposed to $30 for a Finley performance...which I could not afford].

I have to start by saying I consider both Wilson and Finley powerful voices of the avant-garde. When other performance galleries were making artists create "acts" that would fit into "avant-garde" cabarets – fit in terms of both time and fashionable subjectmatter – Wilson at the Furnace was giving both artists and the art absolute freedom to perform magic...until THEY shut the Furnace down for "fire violations." Karen and I were among the artists who enjoyed this freedom.

In other reviews, I have likened Karen's poetry to Ginsberg's, and her performances to Lenny Bruce's in their intensity and laser commentary on the social injustices. Her poetry makes me cry. Her passions within her performances have transported me into vry deep states of reality.

So it is always tragic to see figures like these get sucked, seduced, absorbed, tricked, bribed into "the mainstream." It is tragic not only in personal terms for the individual artists, but in terms of the big picture. When an artist sets herself up as bing an artist who goes beyond the normal frame, who tells the hard truths, who explores the unknown – not to be hip, or controversial, or to be interesting – but because that is how our tribal human being evolves, so it has to be done. When that kind of artist then goes after money, personal fame, and/or glamour while still claiming to be doing avant-garde art, it is denying society the real evolutionary function of the real avant-garde. It tells people, audiences and artists alike, that the avant-garde is justa branch of the entertainment complex with the same rules, goals, reality as television, rock music, Hollywood, and sports. This is like telling people a can of Slim Fast is a balanced meal of real food. It is a lie. And the scary dangerous thing is artists are buying/selling this lie.

Why am I on this rant? About a year or two ago, Wilson sent out a mass mailing in which she defended art [maybe to funders] as a profitable industry which pulls money, people, and jobs into cities. [True – if you want to make a lot of money, buy property where artists live/create now to sell to the yuppies when they discover the area!] This logic is a very steep, slippery slope indeed. The first glaring danger of this commercialized logic is art, according to this logic, which is not profitable or sellable is not and can not be successful worthwhile art! [Hey, ain't that the American way?] I am sure Wilson does not believe this.

Although another mass mailing I received from her in November [I have been mulling it over until now] makes me wonder if she has fallen down that slope into believing the lie. Avant-garde art is art that tells the truth, explores the taboos, pushes the limits. Obviously this kind of art, if it is honest, can not be focused outwardly. Historically, often "The People" [who are not the same thing as "the mainstream"] have identified with the avant-garde because it was telling the truth about their lives. The focus of the avant-garde should always be on telling the truth, not on popularity polls and bottom lines. The focus of the avant-garde has been, and should be, on doing art that is as "pure" as possible...not on mass media entertainment of reaching as many pople as possible by shaping "the product" to that goal.

In her letter, Martha refers to the avant-garde art as "once unpopular work...formerly at the non-profit fringe" – art that Franklin Furnace, according to the letter, has groomed for 20 years to get it ready for the mainstream – and now "Franklin Furnace is in a position to lead the avant-garde into the mainstream." This hurts my head and heart. It is as if Martha does not see her own historical contribution of giving daring art a home. Instead, she tries to take credit for gravity and decay. Mainstream entertainment, by its sheer mass, has always sucked artists out of the fringe, the underground. That is just gravity. In reality, it takes a lot to enter, and to stay in, the underground. The underground is where the real freedom and the real ability to change society are to be found. This is why artists CHOOSE the underground instead of the mainstream. This is also why, when an artist is pulled into the mainstream, this freedom and ability decay. In my own career, I have worked very hard to stay in the underground – this work has been hard precisely because

some of the pieces have turned out to be "popular" [whatever that means!] – attracting the mainstream sharks.

The mainstream has always tried to create a fake avant-garde with fake controversies, fake taboos, fake "hipness," etc. to give the marks a controlled fun-ride through a Disneyland to keep them away from the real edge of life. This is because the powers-that-be cannot control or exploit what is in the real avant-garde.

All of this is business as usual and doesn't scare me.

What does scare me is that someone like Martha bought into it and is becoming a producer of it! Her letter read like a bad *Saturday Night Live* skit. She is selling Franklin Furnace to get money to match a $100,000 NEA challenge grant. With this money, andby teaming up with the corporate and media America, Franklin Furnace will be a "content provider for new media" that sniffs out "emerging alternative artists." [Emerging from where to where? Alternative to what?] These artists and their art must be suitabe to be packaged as "alternative comedy [a.k.a. performance art.]" The letter tells us this new alternative comedy will be "funny, yet provocative." There will be a half-hour TV show of this. Plus they will produce short pieces to be aired "through" *Saturay Night Live* [as if that show has been cutting edge, or even funny, in the past 15 years] and MTV [with its history of censorship!]. Moreover they are seeking other ways of giving "audiences a glimpse of the avant-garde world" [whatever the hell that is!] "in an entertaining and easily consumable fashion" like avant-garde artist trading cards funded by Philip Morris Companies!

The marketing phrase "alternative comedy [a.k.a. performance art]" is very damaging to performance art because it trivializes art. In fact it avoids "art" all together, selling "alternative comedy" as a weird, consumable form of entertainment which will gve you a laugh for your buck. This is not what performance art is. Performance art is the performing/doing/experiencing the act of art. It is going on a physical journey into the unlimited realm of art. Sometimes this journey may be funny or entertaining. But these are not the true goals or rewards. The suggestion [promotion] that these are the rewards of art results in denying people, including the artists, the real, full freeing experience of art.

All of this is selling the art, the artists, and the audience way short. I am not questioning Martha's personal commitment to the real avant-garde art. But realistically such art can not exist in such an environment that she is envisioning. Moreover it is misunderstanding the new media such as the internet and zines. In these media, artists can relate to their audiences directly without middlemen, without compromises, without limiting concepts such as "mainstream" all for very little money...so why sell out?

But this concept of "alternative comedy" is disturbing. I guess the Karen Finley reading was an example of alternative comedy. She read from her parody of Martha Stewart [why bother?] which she obviously wrote just to fulfill a book deal. The reading was empty shtick, a passionless exercise in cleverness with no content or message. The audience responded with reflex laughter, like a laugh track. The problem was Karen was trying to be an entertainer, a comedian. Karen is not a comedian or entertainer. That is not her function. Her function is to inspire, confront, transmute – to tell the truth with passion. That is why people come to her. When she does not do that, the people are not fulfilled. When she ended her act, the people just sat there numb. Then I ased Karen to read her very deep, very moving poem "Black Sheep" – I just happened to have a copy of it with me. As she read it, magic, life, and power started flowing through her body and out into the audience, uplifting them!

When she finished reading, people stood up and clapped...because this was why they came.

Oh, by the way, do you consider yourself mainstream? Do you want to be?

Frank Moore directed the popular 1970's cabaret show, The Outrageous Beauty Revue, and has become one of the U.S.'s most controversal performance artists, targeted by Senator Jesse Helms for "obscene art". Moore publishes/edits the acclaimed underground zine, The Cherotic Revolutionary.

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"Examining the process of creating"

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San Francisco Performance Artist
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THE VIEW FROM DOWN HERE

by Raindog

The Dance of the Idiot Flesh

"So I was working my way through the stations of the cross this morning and I found myself in front of Our Lady of Maccarana and I couldn't remember what to do. Is it right hand to left shoulder, first, or left hand to right shoulder, first?"

"I think it's right over left, first, I think. But I'm not sure."

Manx stood quietly in the shadows of the scaffolding. Somehow he had wound up at the Wrigley Building, that ornate, wrought iron monster near downtown. It was as quiet as a tomb. Above his head the iron intertwined into thick knots of blackened steel, glazed with a thin patina of rust, reddish-brown like the adobe over on Olvera Street. It was like that part of the woods that grandma always warned you not to go into, full of brambles and goblins and other nastiness. He struck a match and was startled by the biting rasp and gush of burning sulfur as it echoed through the hallways. He lit the cigarette and inhaled. He could feel the smoke as it assumed the shape of his lungs. It felt good. As he exhaled, he watched the smoke envelope his torso, as if it was trying to get back into his lungs. Unable to penetrate his layers of clothing and skin, it hung around him like a rejected suitor, petulant and sulking.

The two women had passed beneath him on the first floor on their way out the front door. Their conversation was vaguely religious, but, then it was the season for that. Manx watched them go as he French inhaled the smoke back into his lungs for that second nostalgic tour of duty. It made him feel cool and mysterious and a bit light-headed. The whole place made him feel kind of edgy. Manx liked this. Manx needed to hang out in a place like this to keep his 'paranoid-chops' up to par. There used to be others, like the Pike down in Long Beach, but urban re-development had picked them off, one by one.

Over the years, Manx had gotten used to the blandness of this life he lived, and had grown to accept it. He lived in that part of town where the excitement was provided by high-speed chases on their way to another part of the county to an ignoble, six o'clock, "this just in..," breaking news flash.

It was as if the whole town had grown weary and tired. As if it had just given up and was waiting for the 'wagon' to come. It was inevitable. Somehow, the city was grooming it's populace to become mindless drones; sweating their lives away like complacent idiots, too ignorant to know that they were making their beds in the devil's mouth. Everywhere that Manx looked, he saw the signs. Everywhere.

It was especially obvious in the window displays. The shop windows were always so subdued that it was difficult to gauge the season's progression. Combining that with a climate that was very even-tempered except for a couple of stormy weeks in December made for a very subdued urban environment. Fortunately, there were still a few citizens ready, willing and able to step up to the plate and keep things from getting too dull. But they, too, seemed to be unwitting pawns in the greater devilish design. That's why Manx preferred the solitude of these places.

These were the lonely places. They spoke a secret language that Manx could only understand on a level that he barely grasped. A dark and primal level. The sounds of this language drifted through Manx' brain like a low, wet mist, until they reached the primordial swamps of his lower reptilian brain-stem. And there they coalesced into a message that could be understood. The lonely places drew Manx into them. He returned to them, instinctively, like a swallow returning from Mexico. Only he did it more than once a year.

Somehow the isolation stirred, in him, a great passion for life. It made him keenly aware of it's fleeting nature and it's intrinsic value. The bullshit was stripped away and in it's place was the heady clarity of a pure, clean adrenaline rush. It was consistent and potentially addictive. Like China White or 'crystal' or 'rock'. The state allowed it in small controlled doses in the various forms of sanctioned excitement: the tube, movies, sporting events, Vegas, a good blow job.

But for Manx, these were just fleeting moments on the way to the final embrace. They held little fascination for him, except, maybe, the last item. Apart from that, he found himself a lone sentinel, observing this life, recording it in his mind's eye, for what purpose he knew not. But he did it, anyway. What else was there?

*(From the **Manx Series**, a collection of short-short stories by Raindog soon to be unveiled as part of the new-and-improved **L.A.CULT** web site <www.lacult.com/>. Manx offers an Angelino-Noir viewpoint of life in Los Angeles in the late twentieth century.)*

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Somewhere in this issue, you will find an excerpt from a quotation. If you know the quote, send the complete quote and who said it to Raindog, c/o PO Box 5301, San Pedro CA, 90733-5301. First two people to respond will win a prize. Next month, a new quote or more of the same if no one gets it.

FRANK MOORE INTERVIEW

*(Ed. note: Frank Moore is a performance & visual artist from the Bay area. His pioneering works in the field of **EROART**, as well as his commentaries on art on the edge, have earned him the respect of many in, as well as, outside the art world. Frank is a prolific thinker, an articulate writer, artist, poet, publisher and producer of art happenings...)*

RD: By way of background, how did you get started? Was there a single point/event that inspired you to take up your craft, or was it a slow process?

FM: Because I have cerebral palsy and can't talk, until I was 17, I did not have any way to communicate except through my family members. Then invented my head pointer with which I could talk to people via a letterboard and also could type. Actually before the pointer, they tried a paintbrush on my head...so I started painting nudes from PLAYBOY.

Anyway, when I got the pointer, I immediately started writing

essays, poems, political columns, stories with myself as the hero, erotic ritual performances/plays/films [all with roles for myself!]...years before I actually started performing. This was in 65-66 in Redlands, California, outside San Bernardino. I read novels like The Magus and Steppenwolf. I started wanting to create other alternative/altered realities just like the magicians in those novels. I read the Beat writers and the

"But in reality, art is something you do, not something you are."

French Surrealists, Lenny Bruce and Mort Sahl and Abbie Hofmann, listened to Dylan, watched the hippie movement grow...read about The Living Theater, The Happenings, The Love-Ins. I wished I could be a hip artist living in San Francisco instead of being stuck outside San Bernardino reading, listening, watching, waiting. All of this brewed inside of me.

In college, I started doing political pranks, like rolling into the Marines' recruiting office to join, wanting to push "the button". During the time of the Kent State killings, I saw my life was heading back into isolation if I did not make some radical changes. I dropped out of college and hitched to hippieland in Santa Fe. There I started re-examining things from an occult view. During these years, there was a period for me of intensive reading of books of all kinds.

I hitchhiked in 1970 from Santa Fe to the Brotherhood of the Spirit in northwest Massachusetts. There I danced with the communal rock band, Spirit in Flesh, risking being called a freak, having fun, touring the East Coast.

After a year, I returned to Santa Fe, searching for a method to work with people in an intense, direct way. Ever since college days, I had been writing nonsense scripts dealing with nudity and nonsexual eroticism. Also during my college days, I read such books as Toward a Poor Theatre and The Theatre and its Double. But it was not until I and my communal family took a very intense film-making course in 1972 that I was able to put my weird ideas into performance.

We made films of rolling nude down a hill, smearing bodies with baby food, nursing by a sexy woman. But when the film course was over, I did not have money to make films. I could not see putting my energy into getting money to make films, could not see putting up with the compromises and outside control involved in an artistic context requiring big bucks. For me, the act of breaking a taboo is what is magical, what effects change...not someone seeing it in a film.

This not having money, this not wanting to be controlled and limited by money, was what sealed me into a performance life. So I started looking for a way to work with people. I wanted to see people nude, and touch them, and to create an intensity between us.

One day, a rich woman asked me to paint a nude of her. My wife set me and my paints up in the fancy living room as the woman undressed. On that day I realized how art can give people permission to do what normally is forbidden. It gives a frame that switches realities from the narrow normal reality to the freeing altered reality of controlled folly. On that day, I slipped into art as a life.

Then I somehow stumbled upon a book, Environmental Theater by Richard Schechner, a book about a theater of active involvement and participation, of nudity and intimate physicality, of risk-taking and change. It was right up my alley. Richard's insights and experiments were inspiring to me.

But it seemed to me the Performance Group of Richard's was not well-versed in, or committed to, a living communal intimacy, so they retreated from the edge when they were expected to live the personal intimacy they were acting out. My years of communal living and spiritual study gave me needed keys to take what Richard had done forward. The book fit so well with my own experiments, philosophy and vision, it became the base of the work I would do for the next 25+ years!

RD: Do you find that it's easier or harder to "seize the moment" when creativity strikes?

FM: I am lucky [or smart] in that way. For starters...my life isn't broken up in pieces like DAY JOB and ART etc. For me, it's all the same. Everything feeds everything else. But I think this is a good way of looking at it even if you are an artist with a day job. Instead of seeing the day job as something that keeps you from the CREATIVE ACT called ART [very over-glamorized concepts], see it as a part of the art process...the thing that allows you to do art. If you see the day job as an excuse to not do art now, quit...either quit the job or quit dreaming of being an artist...and start doing art. Our dishwasher repairman is a songwriter-musician [played with Elvis, Sly Stone, Ike Turner...and Hank Williams Jr. is doing his songs. For this guy, repairing dishwashers and writing songs are equal. Michael LaBash, who I live with, has a graphic design company. All the technology, skills, what-have-you that he acquires for his clients also go into our underground "art" projects.

I'm also lucky in that I don't "create" art. I do art. I channel art. It happens in two ways. I just "do" art. Or the art festers inside me for weeks. Then it wakes me up early in the morning formatting. Then when there is time, I binge-puke it out. But I can "pause" this binge-puke state mid-sentence when "real life" calls and then resume. I see myself, not as the creator/owner of the art, but the guardian/steward of the art...protecting it from galleries, audiences, funders, my own ego...making sure it is full-strength.

Frank Moore, the performance artist, is in reality a fictitious front man for personalities and forces that really create performances. What I am as an artist is a channel through which a whole host of factors actively can mix together, creating a performance, creating a community, creating change. I do not see the performance as my own. Many artists get overwhelmed by taking on the whole responsibility of the performance, by thinking the performance is themselves. They get pumped up when a piece succeeds; and they get crushed when a piece bombs. They get boxed in by fear of failing, blocked from experimenting. It is similar to a spiritual healer who forgets that he is not the one who is actually doing the healing. The magic usually leaves him.

RD: In your capacity as an artist, you have probably had the opportunity to meet a lot of other artists; do you encourage the 'good' ones and, if so, how do you encourage them?

FM: One of the sign posts that tells you that your work is successful is when other, younger artists use your work as a jumping-off point for their work. It feels just as good as your heroes telling you that you are carrying on the fight they fought before you. I'm a very lucky and successful guy! Both are happening to me more these days, largely because of my writings on art. I don't criticize art without being asked by the artist...unless ethically it offends me...then I blast it because it has moved into a bigger frame of social evolutionary influence/responsibility.

I always let the person know when I like something to add to it, to support it. But when the artist asks for my opinion, I talk in terms of what she [or the art] is trying to do...did it do it...why/why not...what might work more. It's always in the frame of her art, not imposing an outside value system.

If you just encourage "good" artists, you don't really encourage art. Bad art is the manure from which good and great art springs. All artists have done some bad art. A large percentage of art could be called bad art. In other words, you can not have any art without having bad art anymore than you

can have any science without having most experimentation be "failures". ***So we have to protect the right and the freedom to do bad art.***

RD: What's your take on the art "scene"?

FM: There are all kinds of art. There is art that calms, art that pacifies, art that sells, art that decorates, art that entertains. But what I am committed to is art as a battle, an underground war against fragmentation. The battle is on all realities. The controllers have always tried to fragment us. Fragment us from each other. Imprison us in islands of sex, color, religion, politics, classes, labels, etc. -- they fragment our inner worlds, they blow our individual realities apart, and play the pieces against one another. They are us, or a part of us. They are the controllers, the politicians, the sexists, the women's libbers, the pornographers, the censors, the moralists, the church, the media, the businessmen, educators, the victims and the powerful.

Artists of this breed that I just described need to be warriors who are willing to go into the areas of taboo, willing to push beyond where it is comfortable and safe to explore and build a larger zone of safeness. They need to be idealists, willing to live ideals.

But in the seventies and the early eighties, the calling of this kind of art became the career of art. The passion and idealism became the studying of the trends of what will be "in" next. The passionate vulnerability that creates magic was replaced by a cool and clever intellectualism. We artists got seduced by high tech. We got seduced by the modern media, by the quest for large audiences.

I think performance is being ruined by trying to package it as entertainment, as off-beat cabaret. Some performance is entertaining. Some performance is cabaret. That is great. But when you try to package performance into a neat cabaret format, as I think is the trend, to make performance acceptable and profitable, it becomes a hip form of nightclub watching or groovy T.V. watching. If you limit performance in time and space for acceptability, it stops being performance.

Performance, like any avant-garde art, is the way society dreams; it is the way society expands its freedom, explores the forbidden in safety, loosens up. Society needs its dream art, just as an individual needs to dream or go insane. Our moral majority society, bent on going backwards into the violent blank rigidity of a censored mind, needs taboo-breaking dreams to get back to freedom. Performance is perfectly suited for this dream role. At the present time, our society is at a fork in its growth. It can go deeper into high tech impersonal isolation, or it can rediscover the magic that happens when physical and emotional humans actively and directly link up with one another. Art can either just follow society, just recording the trends, or it can take a pathbreaker role. I am writing this for the artists who are not as lucky as I am to have a physical reminder that they are misfits of society whose job it is to push back the limits of society. This is a reminder that we misfits are still needed.

RD: What do you see as the future of your medium? Do you think that funding (Govt. vs. private) for the arts is good or bad?

FM: I don't see any difference between public and private funding of the arts. Society should fund/support art/artists. But artists should never expect, become dependent on, or get seduced by, such funding. Funders should never be allowed any control over the content of the art. [Funders aren't the same as someone commissioning an art work for his personal life.] Artists have to be willing to be poor/unknown, to pay for their art addiction themselves, to walk away from money and/or fame at any hint of compromise [here we are talking about art, not work]. The "goal" of art is doing the art...then getting the pure art to people...which is the exact opposite of the goal of reaching as many people as possible.

RD: What advice can you give to artists today to help them improve their craft?

FM: I am assuming that we are not talking about commercial or mainstream art now....but art for some magical change and/or subversion. I want to encourage artists, who have not been so blessed with bodies that mark them as misfits, to aspire to be misfits anyway, to do misfit art anyway -- even if you are handicapped by your normal body. Your road is definitely harder than my road. But that's life. See you art as a calling, not a career. This calling to be the agent of evolution is what this misfit art is all about. Evolutionary change on every level always comes from this journey of a single person or a small group, into the web of all possibilities, bringing back into the frame a new possibility, trying it out in the frame. Sometimes the result is insanity for the person(s). Sometimes the new possibility works for the person(s), but the frame is not ready to incorporate it yet, because it would mean giving up opposite possibilities long cherished. But introducing a new possibility into the framework for a certain amount of time, in itself creates a new openness in the frame. True evolution happens when the frame accepts as its own the new possibility brought to it by the misfit heroes. These misfit heroes are doing the kind of art we are talking about.

RD: Aside from the academic-sponsored artist, do you think that it's possible to actually make a living as an artist? Or is it, by necessity, an avocation?

FM: Again assuming that we are talking about misfit art, it is a calling and a holy addiction, not a linear money-making career. If the artist surrenders to the magic of doing the art, the magic will nonlinearally take care of him. This is not the goal of art, just an aspect of the process. How we have been told things work is a lie. But if you trust in the underground nonlinear magic, and are willing to do art without rewards or perks [to be "hungry"], then things happen in amazing ways.

For example, we [me, Linda, Michael] bought a house without committing murder or other crimes...or reshaping the art in "sellable" forms. The magic always provides!

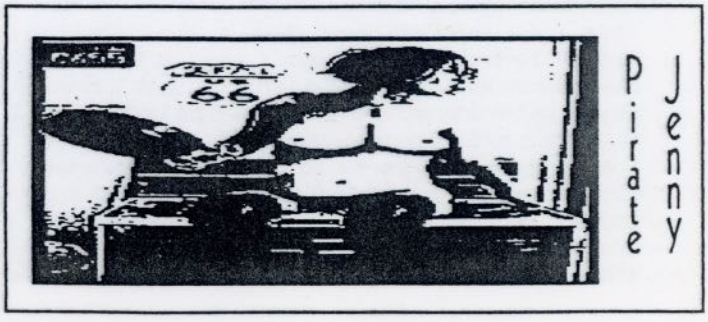
RD: Who do you draw inspiration from these days? Got any high adventure planned?

FM: People around me, our life together, and the art we do together. When people ask, "Where is your work heading? What do you want to do next?" ...how should I know?! It is not my work. It is not my choice. For me, it is not a question of a next thing. It is a growing, evolving vision. I am carried along in this vision. A performance does not have a beginning or an end. It is just a tiny bit of the vision. The vision braids around itself, flowing on. I do not know where the vision is taking me. I have not been down this vision before.

One thing's for sure. We humans are not the end of evolution.

But people should keep checking our WEB OF ALL POSSIBILITIES at: **http://users.lanminds.com/~fmoore/**

There, they can see [and soon, hear] where the vision has taken us...and where the next port of call will be.



EROART, NOT PORN by FRANK MOORE

In June 1988, *Annie Sprinkle* put out a call and some of the leading artists who use sex in their work came together in *Veronica Vera's* N.Y.C. apartment to sign a manifesto which talked about an art movement which *"celebrates sex as the nourishing, life-giving force"* which these artists use, in the self-empowering "attitude of sex-positivism" to communicate our ideas and emotions...to have fun, heal the world and endure." This was a declaration of war against the censoring forces of anti-art, anti-human, anti-sex, anti-fun, anti-love, and truly anti-life...forces of darkness in power in the world today. We called ourselves *Post Porn Modernists*. This was very limiting because it linked us not only to dying deadening porn, but to the glum post modern art movement, setting ourselves up to be just a reaction, just the limb of a dead tree. We needed a name like *Living Pleasure Artists*...or *Eroartists*!

By using the word "porn," it wrongly suggested that eroart somehow came out of what is very sloppily called "porn". Historically, there has always been eroart...and if truth be told, most artists have done at least some eroart. Eroart celebrates sex, love, the body, and the human passions. But porn was born in the Victorian Era with its repressive anti-sexual/anti-pleasure morality. What we eroartists were trying to do was to get back to the healing liberation of eroart.

What we are interested in is art that creates in people the desire to go out and play with other people, and to enjoy life. This is eroart. Historically, one of the tools of this art has been the sex act. But sex has only been a tool, not the goal. And it is just one of many tools.

Isadora Duncan is a person whom I would call an artist in the eroart tradition. She used nudity (especially at private parties where she could dance without feeling moral judgments) and movement to turn people on physically to their own bodies and to passion for life. This is the true goal of eroart. Most books on eroart have missed the true purpose of such art. There has always been sexual erotic art. This kind of art is universal and can be traced back to the caves and beyond.

We artists who signed the manifesto wanted to offer alternatives. We wanted to do art that would satisfy people's natural desire to see other people nude getting turned-on...to satisfy their child-like curiosity to see other people's bodies, to see what they are really like under those clothes. These are healthy human desires.

The time was, and is, right for an art form that addresses these healthy desires. The women's movement has changed people's standards with regard to sex and the quality of relationships. This is true of both men and women. They have scrapped, or are scrapping, the old sexist ways and attitudes. People want to see new ways of relating between humans both in and out of bed. Eroart in all media can show this way of relating.

Unfortunately, in recent years many eroartists have embraced the label of PORN... which is like embracing the label BAD COMMERCIAL ART. It is unfortunate because labels effect both the art and the artists. I don't know about you, but when I hear the word "porn," my mental pictures are...big-dicked jerks and big-titted bimbos fucking bored, unreal, dumb...tubes going in and out of holes...as many tubes going in and out of holes as possible...as close-up as possible...without any real human passion. This picture sets up undermining blocks for eroart. *Eroart aims to liberate people*. This picture makes the artist forget the idealism and importance of the eroart..."oh it's just porn."

This effect of the label of PORN can be seen on many of the female sex artists who have come on the scene since we signed the manifesto. The sex world has become ingrown. There is even a level of not liking/enjoying sex in this circle. Sex has become again the means to power, fame, money... and the means to avoid relationships, intimacy, needing other people. At a recent party of famous sex artists, one woman actually said, *"I don't like sex, I like faking it!"* Most of the people just nodded their agreement. Just shows the gender of the pornographer doesn't effect the porn!

We need to get back to the idealism of eroart...get back to changing/liberating society through eroart. Breaking taboos has always been a part of art, at least the area of art that seeks to change consciousness, change morality, change reality. This is one of the functions of art.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **San Pedro Writers Guild** meets the second Friday of each month, at **2410 S. Meyler in San Pedro**; sharing selections of their work and offering critiques in a non-threatening atmosphere. Contact **Anne Shaw** for more details @ **310-833-2384**.

Ink Spills is seeking submissions for an anthology of poetry and short fiction. Contact Anne Shaw for details & submission guidelines @ 310-833-2384.

Dufus! is seeking submissions for the **LUMMOX Journal**'s first anthology of poetry, short fiction, word art and graphics. If you've ever wanted to send poetry to the LUMMOX Journal, now's the time! ***Dufus!*** will be published in late 1997. Send work, with a short bio and SASE **(IMPORTANT: NO SASE, NO DICE!)** to: **LUMMOX Journal,** PO Box 5301, San Pedro, CA 90733-5301.
(e-mail submissions are okay)

PARTY TIME!!

Hey, boys and girls! Come on down to old San Pedro and celebrate the PREZ' birthday *(no, not Lester Young)* ***Feb. 22! BYO BBQ & POTLUCK!*** *We'll also be celebrating* **my birthday** (yes, I'm throwing myself a birthday party - have to, no one else will...sniff)! ***Raindog at 46 - EEYOW! Get down wit'chor bad seff, baby!***

Party starts around 3pm. If you know how to get to the LUMMOX world HQ, great! If not, call for directions: 310-521-9642.

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ART OF BREAKING TABOOS

by frank moore

SENSITIVE ISSUES? SENSITIVE TO WHOM? Sensitive within what historical time period? Raising these kinds of questions in an issue focused on "artists who deal with sensitive issues" is in itself raising and dealing with a sensitive issue. By seeing art in terms of "dealing with sensitive issues," it places art in the same shallow realm as journalism and fashion. What is a sensitive issue has to do more with the social context within which the art is done than with the art itself. So when the focus is on the social context rather than the art itself, the art gets limited by being tied to political correctness, to fashion, to the thinking by the galleries and other "art experts" that they have the right to dictate the form, style, content, and the subjects of the current art. It would be far better to let future historians analyze the art in terms of "sensitive issues," and let us artists get back to creating.

There has always been a major but hidden concern within my art...the liberation of art from the power structures of art. It is one thing for an artist to deal with, just for an example, AIDS because he personally, artistically is pulled into it by his emotions and his life...and quite a different thing when he does a piece on AIDS because galleries are booking "AIDS pieces" this year. When galleries and theaters impose the subject matter, form, and style of the art they present, it is the same as when they would not book any political art in the 40's and 50's.

A few years ago I was in a controversy with a gallery which tried to withdraw their booking of me. The reason that was given was that my art was old fashioned because it used nudity, audience participation, rituals, and extended time lengths (5-48 hours)...all of which, according to them, went out of fashion with the 60's. Then they somehow heard I had within the piece a nude guy wearing a sign saying "I have AIDS." They said, "now that is interesting...we are booking that kind of art!" They did not ask why he was in the piece. He was a member of my cast who discovered he had AIDS. "The dying man" role was a part of an intense process of exploring death, for both Carlos and people in general, as a part of a lustful joyful life. Within the piece, Carlos talked to each person about dying in this context. Later in the piece, Carlos, as a regular cast member, erotically played with the audience. AIDS was just one aspect of the death process, which in turn was just one aspect of the alternative human experience which was the performance. Focusing on Carlos as an "AIDS victim" obscures him, cheapens him, objectifies him, fragments him away from humanity.

This is also true when we focus on a work of art or an artist in terms of objectifying labels such as gay, woman, black, disabled, etc. I have cerebral palsy, am in a wheelchair, move and sound uniquely. So that any art I do which uses my body just has to have an aspect of the disabled in it. But disability has never been the central theme of my work. However, disability has been a "sensitive issue" within the cultural frame to various degrees in the 20+ years that I have been performing. When I was doing the tacky, sexy, gross, cabaret show, the Outrageous Beauty Revue, in the late 70's, I just happened to have, in the cast of 30, three disabled guys, as well as myself. Some in the audience were upset because they thought we were "normal" actors making fun of crips. It did not help when they figured out that we were "real crips." They then assumed that

(continued on page 7)

LUMMOX JOURNAL
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THE VIEW

WE LIVE IN A PRETTY AMAZING TIMES. EVERY TIME I go to my P.O. Box, I find some new brand of weirdness that someone has labored long and hard to produce. Sometimes it's a recording and sometimes it's written, but whatever the medium, you can bet that it is a labor of love (no matter how bizarre that love might be).

Since I've joined the small press revolution, I've gotten on the mailing lists for some serious fringe-type publications, and, no, I'm not talking the KKK's *Hangin' Times Monthly*, or *Whitey No More*. I'm talkin' about *Losers Are Cool* (4405 Bellaire Dr. S. #220, Fort Worth, TX 76109-5103) or the *Black Clove Tradesman* (c/o Gregg A.R. Yeti, P.O. Box 70, Syracuse, NY 13210-0070) or anything listed in *Bleeding Velvet Octopus* (P.O. Box 25760, Los Angeles, CA 90025, Michael Halchin Editor). These guys presumably have regular jobs that must be performed at some level of competence (although Howington's got a civil service job and we all know what that requires...), and yet, they still create this stuff on a regular basis!

Or look at **Frank Moore**. Here's a guy who's into fringe art, does performances, maintains a mind-boggling web page (I don't know about you, but every time I try to update my page it turns into a disaster!), writes poetry and essays PRODIGIOUSLY, is an art critic, manages to piss off half the art scene in the Bay area (while endearing himself to the other half), AND still produces tapes and his semi-annual 'zine, *The Cherotic (R)evolutionary*. And he does all this from his freakin' wheelchair without ever uttering a word! Momma!

I've probably read more poetry, in the form of email submissions to *DUFUS!* (the deadline approaches, BEWARE!), regular mail submissions, chapbooks, and the occasional actual book, in the last year than in the last ten! Everyone is writing poetry. And, as I've said before, thanks to the miracle (or curse?) of the low-priced computer, now everyone who can spot the tab for copying is producing their own chaps. Most of these are slap-dash, but again the computer makes them look pretty good. I guess the logic here is, "Hey, it's just a book! It's a vehicle to get my words to you and it's a lot cheaper than making tapes!" I suppose you could say that the Guttenberg Bible is just a book (granted, it's a big book!), that what counts is the text, the ideas contained therein, not the layout.

But, layout is actually more important than even I suspected. Consider, for a moment, what you thought when you saw the new format for the LUMMOX. Were you impressed? Many of you have said that it's "so professional looking" and therefore, even "easier to read." It looks good, it feels good, it tastes (digests) good! What else could you possibly want? Apparently, layout is at least half the deal...

So what I'm saying here, as both an editor and a fledgling connoisseur of well-crafted "product" is that there is an audience for the "half-assed", but is it the audience you seek? Aim higher, if you miss the mark you'll still hit more than just dirt! And, while dirt is good enough for some, paydirt is what we really desire (if nothing else than to break even—like this rag—so we can continue to have a forum like this)!

...FROM...

COMING NEXT MONTH, WELL, IT'S AUGUST AND that means it's time for another issue dedicated to the man who inspired me to take up the poem: **Charles Bukowski**. The August issue will feature articles and/or poesy by **Gerry Locklin, Joan Jobe Smith, Fred Voss, S.A Griffin, Scott Wannberg, myself, Jay Alamares, Marshall Werner** and others to be announced. Also in August, on the 15th, Raindog and the LUMMOX Journal will be producing a show at Sacred Grounds (399 W. 6th St. In San Pedro) to raise some money for the LUMMOX. This show, *"Spoken Word Sandwich #5"* will feature a veritable who's who of poets and musicians and the show is **FREE** DIG IT! YES! **FREE** and you can be entertained by the likes of **Scott, S.A. and Doug (Knott); Mike Meloan, Jerry Quickley, Jeffrey McDaniel, Linda J. Albertano, Weba Garretson, Jack Brewer, El Rivera, Jay Alamares, Stephen Hodges** (of the Lotuseaters—see the June review of *HENRI*), **Joe Baiza** (Saccharin Trust & Mecolodiacs), **Mike Watt** (Firehose, the Minutemen, Porno for Pyros), **Melting Pot** (local San Pedro SKA band—they JUMP!), **Raindog** (some guy with an electronic sax?) and others TBA! Why we'll even be giving away door-prizes (CD's and what-not)! You won't want to miss this one, so circle the 15th on your calendar and be there! Seating is limited, so come early...

DOWN HERE

By Raindog

Frank Moore's *Wrapping/Rocking*, Berkeley, 1990.

ART JOURNAL
WINTER 1997
VOL 56 NO 4

I Just Ain't That Good

FRANK MOORE

Readers' Digest once asked me what was the symbolic/social significance of wrapping nude dancers in cellophane . . . and got pissed when I answered, "I like seeing skin under plastic."

After one of my all-nighters, a "scout" from a gallery said, "But it was a ritual, not a performance."

Both of these encounters reveal a basic ignorance of what performance is, thinking the performance is the creation of the artist for some linear purpose, such as entertainment.

I can't claim to be the creator . . . except of different catchy titles for the "same" performance to trick people who think that the same form means the same experience, that you are in a rut if you repeat a performance on more than one tour.

A performance is a living being, an ever-changing, ever-evolving creature reacting with different audiences, casts, environments. This creature is made up of modules and is giving birth to new modules, which can either become a part of the performance and/or become different performances. My job is to take care of, protect, respect these creatures.

One of the "simplest" modules in my care is *Wrapping/Rocking*. *Wrapping/Rocking* uses the simple but magical gesture of rocking to provoke images of comfort and suffering, of childhood and old age, of sex and war, of insanity and play. I am sitting in my chair nude. A nude woman sits on my lap, rocking out all of these primal events, moaning singing these events, rocking under a strobe light to *body music*. Nude, body-painted dancers create a structure on these rocking figures out of household materials such as toilet paper, ribbon, cellophane, and tin foil. Unexpected visual and sound effects are created by this structure. A poem is read over and over. The audience is linked to the surreal, moving, wrapped being by material strands looped around them by the dancers. They are slowly transported into the distant past . . . back into the magic of childhood, back into unlimited dreams, back into the primal cave where the shaman rocks. Everyone rocks in the hot ocean of foil and cellophane, connected within the trance created by the two nude bodies rocking, rubbing beyond sex.

I am not that good to be the creator. Where did it come from? Looking back, I can see the roots . . . the private ritual when a woman got out of a suicidal depression by rocking with me . . . having guys in audiences sit on my lap and rock . . . the time when, to use the spools of ribbon a store had donated, I had a mummy slowly unwind, revealing a nude dancer . . . the performance when I spent a long time convincing a woman in the audience to be the nude rocker with me while a video played . . . the end of that video turned out to be that woman rocking with me.

Frank Moore's *Wrapping/Rocking*, Berkeley, 1990.

Frank Moore's *Journey to Lila*, Berkeley, 1990.

I can see the elements popping up in these older creatures. But I don't know how they came together in *Wrapping/Rocking* in 1986 for the Babel group show. And even now I don't really understand why or how *Wrapping/Rocking* works. I just ain't that good! ▬

FRANK MOORE *directed the 1970s cabaret show* The Outrageous Beauty Revue. *He was targeted by Senator Jesse Helms. Moore publishes/edits the underground zine,* The Cherotic r(E)volutionary.

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{ http://www.sfweekly.com/issues/2001-05-02/nightcrawler.html }

More Is Moore

Frank Moore's Cherotic All Star Band provides nudity, music, cerebral palsy, and, perhaps, art

By Silke Tudor

Thursday nights at **Kimo's** usually draw a small and sundry crowd that is uniquely receptive to the whims of **"Hex Appeal"** promoter and booker **Matt Shapiro**. Featuring an intimate karaoke act led by a man with a chapman stick and a video drummer one week, and a smorgasbord of black metal bands that will attract cops and noise complaints the next, "Hex Appeal" is usually interesting, but an ambiguous rumor about a midget and a "bellowing cripple" copulating during a blues song made attendance at the return engagement of **Frank Moore's Cherotic All Star Band** obligatory.

For years, I've been vaguely aware of Frank Moore's ritual performances and "eroplay" workshops. I've seen fliers hanging on telephone poles with Moore's photographed face leering from atop a sketch of his wheelchair; I've come across handbills comparing Moore's work to Warhol, Zappa, and the Living Theater, calling for "underground actresses" undaunted by nudity, eroticism, and adult play. I am aware that, in the '70s, Frank Moore "staged" performances at both the **Mabuhay Gardens** and at my early punk rock stomping ground, the **Farm**. Since 1999, a number of artists I greatly appreciate -- didgeridoo player **Stephen Kent**, poetry duo **Attaboy and Burke**, and singer/songwriter **Andrew Goldfarb** of the **Slow Poisoners** -- have appeared on Moore's 24-hour Internet radio station, **Love Underground Vision Radio** (LUVeR.com); and his zine, ***The Cherotic Revolutionary***, has been lauded by ***Factsheet Five***, **SubGenius** holy man **Ivan Stang**, and ***MaximumRocknRoll***, and still I'd never seen one of Frank Moore's performances. Something about the psychedelic imagery used on his fliers and the titles of his pieces -- ***Raptures of the Tribal Body***, ***Cave of Passion***, ***Erotic Lava***, ***Playing Dream Passions Naked*** -- reminded me too much of the aborted communes and artist collectives I was exposed to as a child.

According to his memoir, ***Art of a Shaman***, posted on his Web site (www.eroplay. com), Frank Moore was born "spastic, unable to walk or talk." Doctors suggested he be institutionalized until his unpreventable premature death, but his parents rejected the conventions of the time and raised Moore to do the same. From the beginning, Moore says, he was an exhibitionist, and his body, crippled by cerebral palsy, was ideal for his temperament: People stared. At 17, Moore learned to speak by spelling out words with a head pointer (which is how he paints canvases today), and he learned to consider his handicap a blessing. Much in the way that early civilizations thought cripples belonged to the spirit world, Moore knew that standard societal expectations did not apply to him; he was outside, in a misfit place most artists would have to struggle to maintain. In 1970, after a failed attempt at staging his first all-nude play at Cal State, San Bernardino, Moore dropped out of college and hitchhiked to Santa Fe, where a rich woman asked that he paint a portrait of her in the nude. The realization that "art gave people permission to do what was normally considered forbidden" led him to start workshops and nude rituals he called "nonfilms," which explored the boundaries of human intimacy through nudity. The communal family that sprang up around Moore eventually relocated to

Berkeley in 1975, where Moore met his life partner **Linda Mac** and started workshops that turned Berkeley into a strange playground of Moore's devising: Participants buried each other alive in coffins and staged rebirths; they drank urine and launched fantasy costume parades; they staged a multimedia carnival called "The Erotic Test"; they staged theater pieces for which actors trained by working at strip clubs; they took part in political protests and benefits; they started a cabaret show, ti-tled ***The Outrageous Beauty Revue***, in which Frank Moore sang in spite of, and because of, his difficulty in forming words; they held public rituals during which people could "play" with each other without actually having sex. This became the essence of eroplay. In the early '90s, **Jesse Helms** investigated Moore for being obscene, but that only encouraged Moore. Over the years, he has held countless rituals in the Bay Area, with each running as little as 40 minutes and as long as 48 hours.

"The difference between eroplay and foreplay is one of intent," writes Moore. "Physically, there is no difference. It is the same pleasurable, physical turned-on feeling. But ... eroplay is satisfying in itself, in relaxing intensity. There is no build-up of pent-up energy in one climactic act."

For the tenderfoot, Frank Moore's Cherotic All Star Band, an ever-changing musical entity, is a moderate introduction.

"I've played with Frank numerous times," says Andrew Goldfarb, who met Moore through LUVeR radio, "both solo and with my band. Last time we performed was inside a produce warehouse in Richmond. We sang "This Land Is Your Land' together. Frank played piano and, even though he has cerebral palsy, it sounded like he was channeling Thelonious Monk. Frank Moore is a true American, a real example of someone who knows how to turn lemons into lemonade."

Goldfarb recalls breaking his foot eight hours before a performance with Frank Moore.

"I was going to cancel," says Goldfarb, "but I thought, "I'm opening for Frank Moore, I can't cancel.' Frank has invented a new language for [public performance]. Don't always understand what he's up to, but he causes me to examine my notions of sexism, sex, monogamy, and the animal/psychological duality of modern living. He's an amazing inspiration for anyone seeking freedom of expression without any physical or mental boundaries."

Frank Moore arrives at Kimo's with his entourage -- a young five-piece band, Linda Mac, and a blind backup singer/ flutist named **Teresa Cochran** -- wearing little more than a shirt, orange socks, and mismatched shoes. As Moore points to letters on his spelling board with lurching movements of his head, Mac interprets: "Frank says he likes people." Moore grins through his feral beard, exposing large, misshapen teeth. His tongue lolls suggestively. Moore recommends that **John the Baker** take off his pants, and the small crowd applauds encouragingly.

"I've already seen you naked anyway," spells Moore.

"This I gotta see," says Cochran with a grin, her pendulous breasts swaying under a sheer garment. John the Baker disrobes and the set begins with Linda Mac singing over distorted cello and keyboard loops. Moore begins to howl, rising in his wheelchair, his back bowed with effort as his arms flap irregularly at his side. Mac smiles, swirling in her see-through robe, rubbing up against guitarist **Giovanni Moro**, which sends Moore into a spasm of excited grunts and wails. He grins and mugs for the cameras as the music builds. Mac lifts her skirt and rubs her ass against Moore's lap. He rears in his seat, pushing against her with paroxysmal thrusts, matching her off-balance singing with supportive

growls. Cochran lights a pipe and begins smoking as Moore's hand lurches between Mac's legs. The musicians play on, rolling over the stage with bluesy guitar riffs and spontaneous percussion. Cochran edges her way toward Moore's wheelchair, feeling for Mac's ass as Moore's hand fumbles for Cochran's breast. They grunt and wail as Mac continues singing and grinding on Moore's lap. The crowd watches -- some dumbfounded, some delighted -- as cameras flash and Moore bellows. While Mac seems to keep the song in place, the energy of the scene escalates and ebbs along with Moore's directing vocal rumble. His stamina is unrelenting, and the music goes on and on. I am repelled but stuck: I can't turn away, until, finally, Matt Shapiro indicates with a flick of the lights that the set has reached its conclusion.

Satisfied, Moore grins lecherously, and Mac announces that their CD is called ***Dying Is Sexy***.

"That's the most punk rock thing I've seen in years," says a young man who has moved to the front of the stage with a camera. "Where do you go from there?"

"Just because he's crippled doesn't mean it's art," counters another. "He might just be a dirty old hippie in a wheelchair."

"I don't know who's more crazy," says a woman standing outside the nightclub, "the people performing or the people watching."

Frank Moore says the crazy person performs insane rituals not to express himself, but to keep the sky from falling. And the sky doesn't fall.

{ http://www.sfweekly.com/issues/2001-05-02/nightcrawler.html }

Night Crawler SFWEEKLY.COM

05/01/2001

Frank Moore's Cherotic All Star Band provides nudity, music, cerebral palsy, and, perhaps, art

By Silke Tudor

Paul Trapani
Frank Moore's Cherotic All Star Band.

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By Lisa Davis

The Path of Inquiry
How research for this story was conducted

Arts Wire CURRENT

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Judy Malloy, Editor
jmalloy@nyfa.org

Arts Wire CURRENT is a project of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) -- http://www.nyfa.org

Arts Wire CURRENT features news updates on social, economic, philosophical, and political issues affecting the arts and culture. Your contributions are invited.
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ARTS FOES HELMS, THURMOND, AND GRAMM TO LEAVE SENATE

WASHINGTON, DC -- Three men who vehemently opposed National funding of artists and the arts -- Jesse Helms, (R-NC) Strom Thurmond, (R-SC) and Phil Gramm (R-TX) -- have announced their intention to retire from the United States Senate.

In recent years, the US has spent about $6.00 a year on the arts per person, less than Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, or the United Kingdom. But while other US government agencies handed out sizeable, largely unquestioned contracts to the military industrial complex, Helms, Thurmond, Gramm, and other right wing Republican senators squandered Congressional time attacking the small amount of money allocated to foster our country's culture.

Phil Gramm -- who in a current press release promoting legislation to double spending on government-sponsored research recommends "raising the amount budgeted for science from $34 billion a year to $68 billion annually by the year 2008" -- wrote in an anti- arts funding press release: "If we are really serious about less government and more freedom, if you really believe that government is too big and too powerful and too expensive, if you really believe that having the average family give government almost a third of its income is too much, if you believe all of those things, as I do, I don't see how you can then justify having the government take $100 million from working families to spend on what we define as 'art.'"

And in a series of statements advocating eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts, (NEA) he suggested giving taxpayers a 200 tax credit instead of funding the arts. "They might decide to spend it going to three or four Texas A&M football games," said Gramm. (who according to THE WASHINGTON POST has denied speculation that he might take over as head of A&M)

Strom Thurmond consistently voted to eliminate national arts funding. And, according to former NEA Chair Jane Alexander's book COMMAND PERFORMANCE, at her first meeting with him he declared that "First Amendment rights are an excuse for people to do things they shouldn't be doing."

In describing her reaction to Thurmond's words, Jane Alexander writes: "Was this the U.S. Senate? Was this what a senator of the United States actually believed? What had happened to the Constitution?"

Jesse Helms, in particular leaves a legacy of vicious attacks on artists, on the arts community, on freedom of expression, on public funding of the arts, and on public television.

"Jesse Helms is rightly famous for his attacks on artists and free speech over a long and sordid career. No one did more to undermine public support for art that asks provocative questions or to impose narrow minded standards of 'decency' on broadcasters," notes Marjorie Heins, author of NOT IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN INDECENCY, CENSORSHIP & THE INNOCENCE OF YOUTH and director of the Free Expression Policy Project at the National Coalition Against Censorship. (NCAC)

During Helms' tenure, artists, arts organizations, and the National arts support system were continually forced to defend themselves against inaccurate attacks. In COMMAND PERFORMANCE, Jane Alexander reproduces a lengthy 1994 letter to her from Jesse Helms in which one by one he utilizes misinformation (either through ignorance or deliberately) to attack individual artists and arts organizations who had received Arts Endowment funding -- including Tim Miller, Holly Hughes, Karen Finley, Marlon Riggs, The Kitchen, Frameline, (which hosted the International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival in San Francisco) the Walker Art Center, Franklin Furnace, Highways, Centro Cultural de la Raza, Brava! For Women in the Arts, and Visual AIDS for the Arts. (for programs including DAY WITHOUT ART and the Ribbon Project which encourages the wearing of a red ribbon to express support for those living with AIDS)

Helms' systematic attacks on individual artists focused national attention not on the myriad creative approaches of this country's artists and the compelling need for their support -- but rather on the narrow-minded prejudices of the attackers. The Arts Endowment was under continual threat of elimination. The National arts budget was drastically slashed. Content restrictions were imposed on government grants.

Celebrating many of the innovative individuals who (with little financial compensation) have dedicated their lives to art making, an NEA Artist's Fellowship was a meaningful

award for this country's artists to strive for. But in the summer of 1995, Congress eliminated grants to all individual artists, with the exception of writers and jazz masters.

In recent years, the NEA's budget has been gradually increased, but the content restrictions imposed on grant recipients -- instigated in 1989 by Jesse Helms, unheard of in most free countries -- remain a part of our National arts funding.

Fellowships for our country's individual artists have yet to be restored.

"In the aftermath of the tumultuous years of the public funding debate, my greatest fear is that the creative souls of artists and arts leaders have been numbed, deadened or exhausted," Rob Maddrey, past president and chief executive officer of ARTS North Carolina, wrote in "Rekindling the spirit crucial to arts organizations" in PHILANTHROPY JOURNAL ONLINE. "....A choreographer may create a new dance, but it might have to be performed on eggshells."

Helms' demagoguery symbolized the worst in american politics. It would be nice, but perhaps overly optimistic, to hope that his departure will mark the end of an era of bigoted culture-bashing" - Marjorie Heins, Director of the Free Expression Policy Project at the NCAC

Many of Jesse Helms divisive attempts to extinguish National recognition of artists and arts and to limit freedom of expression were initially futile, but their cumulative result was a weakening of the support system for the diverse artistic expressions in this country, an undermining of public understanding of the challenging work of artists who -- in the words of artist Martha Wilson, Founding Director of Franklin Furnace Archive -- "understand that the controversy that sometimes accompanies the risk-taking involved in artmaking is not an embarrassment to our nation, but the proud result of life in a diverse, democratic society."

Of Helm's methods, artist Frank Moore wrote in an open letter:

"Enough is enough. I have read in the L.A. TIMES and THE VILLAGE VOICE that you have the General Accounting Office investigating Karen Finley, Johanna Went, Cheri Gaulke, and myself. Why are you going behind our backs? Why aren't you talking directly to us artists, instead of having the G.A.O., at the taxpayers' expense, going to the galleries and the theaters we have performed in to ask veiled questions about us?

Here I am. Let's talk, man to man. It is the American Way. What do you want to know about me? You had my address because I sent you my article about how I think what you are doing is patently offensive to the Bill of Rights. After all, it is the American Way to directly confront your opponent, giving him a chance to answer, and giving the people a dialog. But you did not send me a letter. You sent the G.A.O."

And in the WASHINGTON POST last week, David S. Broder detailed Jesse Helms' "willingness to pick at the scab of the great wound of American history, the legacy of

slavery and segregation, and to inflame racial resentment against African Americans," including his filibuster against the Martin Luther King Day Holiday and his use of the media to escalate racial tension.

Broder relates that "In 1990, locked in a tight race within African American Democrat, former Charlotte mayor Harvey Gantt, Helms aired a final-week TV ad that showed a pair of white hands crumpling a rejection letter, while an announcer said, 'You needed that job and you were the best qualified. But they had to give it to a minority because of a racial quota.'"

"That is not a history to be sanitized," Broder emphasizes.

In addition to his attacks on artists and the NEA, during the course of his 30 year term in the U.S. Senate, Jesse Helms proposed adding content restrictions to the appropriations legislation for Corporation for Public Broadcasting; proposed adding content restrictions to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994; attempted to derail the Goals 2000 education bill; and introduced (with Strom Thurmond) legislation designed to dilute copyright protection afforded Musical Composers and Songwriters.

"Helms's demagoguery symbolized the worst in American politics. It would be nice, but perhaps overly optimistic, to hope that his departure will mark the end of an era of bigoted culture-bashing," said Marjorie Heins, who worked on NEA v. Finley while a lawyer at the ACLU.

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House Of Tudor

Drum Buddy infomercials, twisted Bubblegum pop, and extreme erotica.

BY SILKE TUDOR

CNF Center for Normal Peop

Think Halloween in San Francisco has lost its edge? Here's a show that will take all your self-indulgent hopes and your world-weary ennui and shove them up your ass -- or, at least, up the posterior of an overweight trailer-park Elvis impersonator and a sex-crazed paraplegic with a Messiah complex. The flier for **"The Erotic Warhol"** -- an event starring Frank Moore's Cherotic All-Stars, as well as eXtreme Elvis and Fluffgrrl -- promises to destroy your reality while asking if you're "ready to die." While I don't think you will physically expire at this show, it's a good guess that your sense of well-being, good taste, and personal hygiene will be forever shattered. If Bob Madigan's self-induced vomitorium -- from the creators of *Cum Bucket, It's Fluffgrrl!* -- doesn't push you over the edge, perhaps the King's shit-hurling act or the drooling-and-bellowing masturbatory Olympics of Frank Moore will do the trick. For those impervious to the sensual authority of human fluids and excrement, the music itself might do you in. "The Erotic Warhol" takes place on Saturday, Nov. 3, at Kimo's at 9 p.m. Tickets are $5; call 885-4535.

Cathleen Loud

Looking For Moore

Performance artist, guru, shaman and activist Frank Moore opens the door to life's possibilities

You approach the entrance of the Burnt Ramen, an old warehouse-turned-performance-venue near the railroad tracks at 111 Espee Avenue in Richmond, Calif. There is a nervous, excited energy rumbling in your stomach. This is your first Frank Moore performance. You're intimidated. You've heard about this guy and his performances with the Cherotic All-Star Band and you've seen the fliers posted around San Francisco, flapping in the wind. You've heard about the nudity, the exploration, the lack of political correctness, the delight, the tackiness but you're still not quite sure what to expect once you cross the threshold into the unknown world. Challenged by curiosity, you grab the handle of the door, about ready to charge in when you notice the following sign is posted: "Warning! Enter at your own risk! This piece may be threatening to your everyday reality. This piece may cause questioning of the common reality. These symptoms may appear days after the piece, without warning... Even during the piece, you may feel as if nothing is happening...or you may even enjoy it. *But,* the above symptoms may still appear, leading to restlessness and even radical change."

You take a deep breath, lower your head and walk in. The door slams closed behind you as you enter Moore's Web of All Possibilities.

Born with cerebral palsy and unable to walk or talk, Moore believes he was born a lucky guy. Until the age of 17, he lived shut out from the rest of the world because he couldn't communicate and because his negative attitudes and low self-image alienated him. So, at age 17, he invented a head pointer and a board with words and phrases on it. He learned to speak by pointing to the words and phrases on the board. (He still communicates this way today.) It took patience on his part and the part of the listener to

have a conversation but, at last, he could communicate!

His next battle was to overcome his low self-image. He was allowing the society's expectation of what a "crippled" person should be, to shape his reality. Society's expectation was winning. But not for long.

Around age 28, Moore's life turned. Something happened that made him look at the way he viewed himself. He couldn't get laid! Women viewed him as "the nice guy," the guy who would listen and give advice, but never the guy who they wanted to have sex with. He accepted this because he thought it wasn't right to burden a girl with his ugly body. Eventually, after one more failed relationship, Moore had had enough. He had identified himself for too long with a reality that thought of him as ugly, unfortunate or "crippled." He wasn't happy. He decided he could either accept the "reality" of his ugly body and an asexual role he played *or* he could change the way he thought about himself. He wanted to be happy and beautiful, and not feel like a burden to anyone. So, he started to *believe* he was a beautiful human being. He didn't think of his "crippled" body as a burden; he viewed it as a tool. He viewed it as the mark of a shaman. Historically, the gods marked shamans by their deformities or abnormalities, to set them apart from the rest of the tribe. They would bring back messages for the greater good or to heal those in need.

Physically, Moore could do things with his body that most people can't. He could bend, move, twist and contort himself. Socially, he could break the norm. The possibilities before him were endless as he was without the fear of living up to any expectations. "I was never under any pressure to be good at anything, to make money, to make it in 'the real world', [or] to be polished. I could focus on having fun, on going into taboo areas where magical change can be evoked," Moore says on his web site, the Web of All Possibilities (www.eroplay.com).

To subvert reality, Moore began creating art in 1965. His first experience was playing

with oil paints. Since he was in the business of breaking taboos and pushing limits, nothing was too extreme for him. He'd meet strangers on the street and ask them if he could paint nude pictures of them. Many people agreed and he saw how art allows people to do things that are generally forbidden. There is willingness, he says, to push beyond comfort and safety in art and this openness brings about change.

As he performed the magic of art, more possibilities opened up for him. He began experimenting with different types of theater, performance, and workshops and with shamanism. Shamanistic art includes public and private rituals, audience participation and apprenticeship. It allows people's dreams to become realities because there are no limits with regards to time or space, no moral guidelines and no rules. With the ideas of normalcy suspended, anything, even magic, can happen. "Frank's art inspired me and showed me how far it was possible to go in the direction of art as an engulfing experience, and of doing genuine, no- bullshit magic in the modern world," says Fred Hatt, a visual and performance artist and photographer who has attended many of Moore's performances and who is also a featured artist on Moore's web site.

In the mid-1970s, after an unsuccessful all-nude play at California State University, relocating to Santa Fe and New York, and then finally settling in Berkeley, Moore met Linda Mac. Frank rolled into Don Travel, the agency in Calif. where Mac worked. He came right up to her. "The moment I had eye contact with Frank, I 'saw' him, " she recalls. He invited her to come to his house because he was casting a play. He wanted her to audition (later, she found out there really was no play). She went to the house, read some of Moore's writings and she was hooked. "I knew immediately that this is what I had been waiting for," Mac says. The two have been together, working and playing, for over 25 years.

Moore's performance experimentation eventually led to the creation of a joyful community based on freedom and closeness. The community was an alternative to the way society isolates people. With an entourage of 30 people- friends, performers and students, Moore

and Mac began doing workshops and private performances "just for fun." These experiences created intimate relationships and altered states among everyone involved. Silliness, hidden fantasy, child's playfulness and creativity became a part of their normal lives. Public performance piece evolved from the workshops and private performances. One of the first public performances was a costume parade through the streets of Berkeley. The performers were dressed in elaborate costumes of brightly colored skin paintings and risqué outfits made from net and lace.

In the late '70s, Moore and his gang, which had now been together for four years, started doing longer ritualistic performances. He created a rock-and-roll cabaret-style show, called the Outrageous Beauty Revue, which ran every Saturday night for 3 years at the Mubuhay Garden Nightclub and various colleges and clubs in San Francisco. Moore describes the O.B.R. as "an unpolished show that flaunted nudity, eroticism and gore in a silly, child-like playfulness -- an ever-changing show with pregnant sex symbols, nude girls, crippled rock stars, men as women and women as men without any sexual meaning." It was outrageous, shocking, and different. On the surface, the performances appeared to be entertainment laced with a kind of shock value. But Moore describes the shows as having a much deeper meaning than just shocking entertainment. They were, in fact, another way in which Moore fought against the societal "norms" of the time.

The community that performed with Moore eventually broke up. He realized, after they tried to incorporate sex into their lives that it was not the answer to the physical connectedness they were searching for. Moore continued to focus on the energy that resulted from the intense, playful, physical involvement he had with them and from this, an important physical aspect to Moore's work began to evolve. He coined this element "eroplay". Moore describes eroplay as "intense physical touch and

play among adults that is not sexual but has no limits."

Today, Moore incorporates eroplay in many of his performances. In creating this alternative reality, Moore tries to expand and break down the way sex is viewed in our culture. Says Mac: "Eroplay is a way of having a depth of interaction with someone that is fun. The whole social structure is set up to keep people feeling like they are not free. With eroplay, one has a direct visceral experience of that not being true." She says eroplay is not about sex, but about people connecting with one another on a very deep level and that it gives people hope. "It feels wonderful to be a part of!" says Teresa Cochran, a performer in the Cherotic All-Star Band and a student of The University of Possibilities, Moore's shamanistic performance school.

Cochran, who first met Moore at a block party five years ago, remembers the magic she felt the first time that she met him. She told Moore and Mac that she wanted to play music. Of course, they invited her to a jam session! The jam was very improvisational and free form and, while playing, Cochran realized the dynamics between the audience and the performers. There was no distinction between the two. Playing with them and feeling the freedom of expression liberated her. "My stage fright totally disappeared when I saw Frank doing exactly what he wanted to do," she says. "If he can do whatever he wants to do, I can do whatever I want to do."

"I saw Frank right away and said 'This guy knows how to live," says Michael Labash who met Moore in 1988. At the time they met, Labash says he was a yuppie, well-dressed, freshly combed hair and not one you'd expect to be open to Moore's reality. He played in a band called Mr.Dog (which later became the Counting Crows). At one particular performance he met a woman named Leigh Gates who happened to be one of Moore's apprentices. After talking with Gates for some time after the show, she invited him to read some of Moore's writings. He said

when he read them "the floor feel out from under my world." A few weeks later, Labash attended a small gig of Moore's at Rather Ripped Records in Berkeley. "I sat there with my mouth open the whole time. I had never seen anything like it. Nude bodies, Frank singing, saran wrap. It was wild," he says. Not much later after the record store gig he attended a 12-hour performance and also got to meet with Moore. After a few meetings, Labash decided to quit Mr.Dog. He realized that it wasn't fulfilling to him. Soon after, Moore asked him to be an apprentice at the University of Possibilities. Now, 13 years later, Moore, Mac and LaBash live together as partners in San Francisco.

Moore averages about two public performances (rituals, music gigs, poetry readings, etc.) a month. The shows are mostly free form and when the Cherotic All-Stars have a performance, they don't even rehearse. They just show up and play! When Moore performs, anything goes. Sometimes there are nude men and women, sometimes they sing and dance, sometimes rock and touch, sometimes all of it happens and sometimes none of it happens.

The performances allow you to step outside of what is generally accepted in order to explore, question, test and evolve by pushing you to the limit, by making you uncomfortable and by showing you a reality that is usually very different from what you are used to. You as the audience and performers, who are one and the same once the door closes and the performance begins, are exposed to a show that can become whatever your dreams will allow. Audience members watch, some deliciously, hanging onto every movement, every noise, delighted and turned on. Others turn away, not wanting to watch, sickened to their stomachs, ready to leave. Some people feel vulnerable, some challenged; others are bored and even angered.

"People have very intense responses and reactions. A lot of times people cry", says Alexi Malenky, another performer and apprentice of Moore's. "I've never noticed anyone not be affected at all by it," he adds. He explains that

sometimes people get up and leave in the middle of a show. He says that it's easy to think they are leaving because they don't like what they see. But Moore says that when people leave a show early, it's because they've gotten as much as they want from that performance or they've reached a personal threshold they don't want to go past.

While Moore's performances change some people's lives and challenge them to seek authenticity, others are unmoved and disinterested. William Mandel, an activist and author of "Saying No to Power" (Creative Arts, Berkeley, 1999), has known Moore for about 2 years. "I haven't attended Frank's performances because his videos don't turn me on to them. I don't think the people are particularly talented. I'm not impressed by the music," he says.

Since no 2 performances are ever the same, you never know what the night has in store. Sometimes the performers will take part in all night ritual performances and sacred ceremonies, sometimes music jams, or sometimes more traditional, "scripted" plays. In each instance, it is a different experience because Moore allows the shows to evolve in their own. The magic is different each time depending on who is there, who participates, how the audience feels and how the performers interact with each other.

In 1994, Moore directed and produced a scripted play called "No Tongue Will Live To Speak, No Ears Will Yearn To Hear," written by Native American chief, Distant Eagle. Dorothy Jesse Beagle, a poet and artist who saw the show recalls what it felt like to see the piece. "Much of the play was played nude but was never erotic nor seemed anything but totally natural, spiritual with great lines and acting. No one would think, let alone say, 'hey guys I'm watching nudes.' It wasn't about nudity but about a primitive tribe and we all felt we were part of the play."

Moore's ritualistic approach to his performances gives them a sort of secrecy. Mac explains a secret cave ritual that is sometimes performed. She leads you, blindfolded, to the

door of a cave that has been constructed out of painted backdrops. There, she gives you a drink called somala. The drink looks and tastes like water but what it really is, is up to you to decide. Mac tells you that the drink is a drug of dreams and dying. It does not have any side effects and won't make you do anything you don't want to do. It does, however, make it easier for you to do whatever you do want to do. From there, Mac leads you into the cave. Mac won't give details about what goes on in the cave and she says you have to come to a performance and find out for yourself.

Hatt attended a five-hour show of Moore's called "Journey to Lila" in New York City in 1989. He agrees with Mac about the secrecy of the performances. "You need to experience one of these full ritual performances yourself, and the experience will be fuller if you don't know what to expect," he says.

Moore does not separate his art from his private life or his public life. It is all the same to him. This is why he spends so much time building relationships, adding dimensions, subverting reality and breaking the norms and taboos of society. Malenky says that in blending all parts of his life, Moore is "creating a life in which people live fully and joyfully in closeness with each other and the world around them."

Corey Nicholl found this lack of separation hard to become used to when he first met Moore ten years ago. Nicholl who is an apprentice of Moore's says it wasn't easy to remain open to the reality that Moore presents. "If you want keep such a control over things and have this part of reality over here and this part over there, you're going to work really hard to do that. Everything is struggling against you," he says. But, he explains, if you surrender and give up trying to control things, you'll see how life bleeds and melts together, that there are no boxes. You form those boxes yourself.

Moore's work doesn't rub everyone the right way. In 1991, Senator Jesse Helms labeled Moore art, and a group of other artists' art, as "obscene." Because many of these artists had

received funding from the National Endowment of Arts, the General Accounting Office investigated and several of them lost their NEA funding. Moore was not one of them that lost funding but he was more or less blacklisted by Helms. He was forbidden to perform at places that received money from the NEA. If he did perform, the venues were at risk of losing their funding.

In a letter that Moore sent to Helms, he asks, "Why are you closing channels of expression and of funding to me without due process of law?" He continues, "It is a political and cultural blacklist under the cover of obscenity. Extortion and blacklists are against the American ideals and spirit." Moore says because of Helms' threats, his work became even hotter. It got him more opportunities for gigs. And more gigs meant more magic.

Regardless of who does or doesn't like his work, Moore continues. His newest call to freedom is a web-cast Internet radio station called Love Underground Vision Radio or LUVeR for short (www.luver.com). LUVeR brings almost all of his art, his philosophy of life and his reality together. Launched on Valentine's Day of 1999, LUVeR has become a forum for all different types of art and various people. "LUVeR is probably the most eclectic of radio stations, Internet or otherwise," says Beagle who has her own show on LUVeR called Jesse's Full Pantry. Weekly, there are alternative news shows and current events shows on politics, oppression and survival. There is erotica, philosophy, lecture programming and satirical and political humor. Original music from experimental musicians, punk rock, folk, bluegrass, and classical musicians are broadcast. There are daily newscasts by a news team, weekly interviews that cover artists and other interesting people and video coverage of live events and news conferences. LUVeR is a playground of totally uncensored, nonprofit, noncommercial expression. Hatt says that Moore is “proudly underground” and has never made any concession to try to be commercial, to

fit into any respectable art scene or to be acceptable to any institution."

Moore's work may not be considered art by some. His performances might scare you and even want to make you run the other way. The bottom line is that his work is an inspiration to people. For those people that it touches, their lives are forever changed. They look at things a little differently and probably a little more clearly. Moore's work changed me. Call me what you will- naïve, weird or strange. I now believe in the possibilities of life. I know have a fuller understanding of a life without limitations and expectations. I am filled with a deep sense of joy just by knowing Moore. I was looking for Moore and I found exactly what I had hoped.

FORUM

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Berkeley Daily Planet
Friday, January 18, 2002
Volume 3, Issue 239

Berkeley will not be censored

Dear members of BCM, BTV, members of the Berkeley City Council, The Press, and Berkeley citizens concerned about censorship:

Censorship is NOT a community value in Berkeley!

Hi. I'm a producer on BTV, cable channel 25, which is (for those of you who don't know) our public access channel in Berkeley. I do my own show, UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES, as well as "sponsor" a show by Mbanna Kantato (well-known as the father of the microradio movement) and the popular show by the sex therapist/educator/personality Dr. Susan Block. All three shows are politically/socially radical, aiming to change society.

A few weeks ago we heard that there would be an attempt to remove Block from BTV. This would be very hard to do because BTV is forbidden by law from censoring the programs. This fact is flashed on BTV every five minutes late at night. But when did that ever stop censors?! I never have met a censor who thought/admitted what she was doing was censorship!

So I wasn't surprised when my sources at BTV told me what happenedat the board meeting a few days ago.just shocked and outraged! It seems that two producers who have shows on BTV came to the meeting to complain about the Dr. Susan Block show. They said their kids were watching BTV on New Year's Eve, and Dr. Suzy came on ... and they wanted it off the air!

(Mmmm.does that mean if I don't like THEIR shows, I can march in and demandthey be removed?) This is silly and extremely scary!

The Board reasonably said they can't do that. But then reason appears to have left The Board didn't send these misguided souls on their way with suggestions that they should establish TV-watching rules for their kids, watch tv with their kids, block the shows that they don't want their kids watching, etc.

Instead The Board proposed a resolution to put all programs that contain the combination of nudity and sexual acts in a 2-4am time slot..when there are only a few people watching! Someone else proposed that it be midnight-2am, but that amendment failed, and the board voted in the 2-4am slot.

This is censorship, pure and simple. This is keeping the programming from the people who are watching, who find the programs valuable. This is punishing these programs because some people find some of the contents challenging! It is also reactionary. Berkeley is not reactionary.

It is standard in the mass media to start "adult programming" at 10 p.m. You can switch on brain-dead, emotionless erotic trash on HBO anytime after 10 pm.but, if this foolish rule stands, we can't see deep, thoughtful films about human love, relationships, etc.in fact any r-rated films that contain the combination of nudity and sexual acts.whatever that means before 2 a.m. on BTV! This is just some of the absurd rule. Sex in leather would be acceptable. But two nude people lovingly touching, only after 2 a.m. on BTV!

Scary!

I am told that no one on the staff at BTV even knew this was on the agenda. I am also told that the staff are all very unhappy about this, including Brian Scott, BTV's executive director. A network of people/producers are going to The Board's next meeting to let The Board know what other people think, since they seem to only be hearing from people who are complaining about the "adult" shows, mostly Dr. Suzy's show.

Scott is asking people to call him to tell him what they think about this censorship. Call him! Brian Scott is at 848-2288, extension #15. His email is bscott@betv.org. This censorship, if The Board doesn't return to reason, will develop into a red hot political potato! WE GOT KPFA BACK! WE AIN'T GIVING UP BTV!

I am told The Board ordered Scott to spend the week reviewing adult content tapes for the week of the 28th to decide which ones get moved/censored. WHAT A CREEPY TASK FOR ANY FREEDOM-LOVING PERSON TO BE ASKED TO DO!

(The "adult classification was picked by the producers themselves when "adult " meant the shows would start at 10pm or after. Now it has been turned into a censoring tool!) I have talk to Scott. He said that after he reviewed the shows, in his view he found nothing that falls into the frame that The Board gave him. So all shows, including THE SUSAN BLOCK SHOW, will not be move/censored. But BTV needs our help to ENLIGHTEN The Board!

I should stop here. But I'm jealous of Susan Block! Why is her show getting all the attention? My show is as sexy as hers. True, the week The Board picked to judge the contents of the shows on (which is sort of like judging a 700-page book by one randomly selected page!), my show just features an award-winning, one-woman play about mental illness. But there is nudity in it..true, it isn't erotic. But I will try harder! Hey, last night

Dr. Suzy didn't even have any nudity! But keep watching! And I'm sure THOSE

people will!

Cable access move sparks censor debate

■ Producer decries Berkeley's decision to change the hours of a local adult program

By Greg Cannon
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Friday, February 1, 2002

BERKELEY — With its rich history of political protest regularly in evidence on downtown streets, at City Hall and on the UC Berkeley campus, this city enjoys a well-earned reputation as the birthplace of the modern free speech movement.

But a local cable television producer says a decision to shift adult-themed programming on the local public access cable television station to the wee hours of the morning amounts to censorship.

The move has prompted a potentially touchy debate about where decency standards lie in a famously liberal community where people defy local laws to march naked through city streets and where a nude man addressed the City Council several years ago.

Frank Moore has produced "Frank Moore's Unlimited Possibilities," a frequently erotic-themed variety show, and served as the local sponsor for the Dr. Susan Block show, a sex education and entertainment show produced in Los Angeles, for about a year and a half.

These programs, with their sexually explicit content, have been shown at 10 p.m. or later, putting them within the so-called safe harbor of late-night and early-morning hours when children are assumed to be somewhere other than in front of a television. The 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. window for adult material was established by the 1996 Supreme Court ruling that said public access programming is protected speech.

But, prompted by a flurry of complaints from concerned parents, the board of Berkeley Community Media, the nonprofit group that runs the city's two public access channels, recently cut the hours such programming can be shown.

Moore says the decision to bump sexually explicit programming to 2 to 4 a.m. turns the safe harbor into a ghetto when no one's watching, resulting in de facto censorship.

"This is silly and extremely scary," Moore wrote on his Web site in a recent appeal for support.

Public access officials stress that no programs have been bumped from their current times slots.

"They said they didn't want anyone engaging in sexual activity nude (outside of those hours)," said Brian Scott, BCM's executive director. Since the board's action, Scott has personally reviewed all programs that might stray past that line, but hasn't found any that have.

"We certainly don't want to censor programming," Scott said. "We'll just keep monitoring it."

Block criticized the move. "That's really ridiculous," she said in a telephone interview from Los Angeles. "Hardly anybody stays up that late or gets up that early. It's a real no man's land and that's why they want to do it."

It was an episode of Block's half-hour show in which a nude woman performed a sex act on herself that apparently drew the most complaints from parents whose children had come across the show while up late on New Year's Eve.

Block said the public access show, which is shown in Southern California and New York, has much in common with a show she does for HBO that is shown as early as 11 p.m.

Berkeley's public access is paid for by the city with proceeds of its franchise agreement with cable provider AT&T Broadband.

In a 1996 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court said that public access stations can regulate when programs are shown, but can't regulate their content.

The only limit is the law banning obscene content. But defining what's obscene is left to individual communities, although typically it's the courts that decide when cases are prosecuted.

Berkeley may be one of the first communities to try to formalize those standards. "At this point no one has been willing to step up to the plate and say we're going to establish what those community standards are," Scott said.

And with good reason, say community media advocates. Putting obscenity standards down on paper is a "very sticky" proposition, said Bunnie Riedel, executive director of the Alliance for Community Media, which represents 1,500 public access groups nationally. "Human nature dictates that as soon as you write down what you can't do, people do it."

Deciding whether a program can run by judging it against a set of standards could amount to prior restraint of free speech and a huge headache for public media groups, Riedel said. Better to show everything and rely on the courts to decide should prosecutors allege that the line has been crossed, she said.

Local producers are obligated to let BCM know if their shows contain adult content, and ultimately they're responsible for that content: not BCM, not the city, and not AT&T.

Board member Kari Shaw voted for the new hours. She said the move is not perfect but called it a temporary measure until the board and the public can give the matter the discussion it deserves, beginning with a Feb. 19 meeting.

"I felt that we were getting enough complaints from enough different areas that we should do something in the interim until we can figure out what to do," Shaw said.

Moore said he's opposed to any scheduling constraints, but he can accept the 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. window. Block said she respects people's opinions and their desire to keep her show from their children, even if she disagrees with them.

But Block said relegating programs to times when no one's watching is wrong. "Public access is the people's medium," she said.

Reach Greg Cannon at 510-262-2713 or gcannon@cctimes.com.

THE TIMES West County

FREE

Berkeley Daily Planet

Volume 3, Issue 264

Covering The World of Berkeley

Thursday, February 21, 2002

B-TV reveals bare essentials of the first amendment

By Guy Poole
Special to the Daily Planet

Two programs on BTV channel 25 depicting "sexually explicit" material has sparked a free speech debate that may in fact put some of the channel's funding in jeopardy.

"Unlimited Possibilities" and the "Dr. Susan Block Show" both contain the questionable material, and Frank Moore, the programs' producer said the shows are "on the chopping block" because of citizen complaints.

At Tuesday's City Council meeting Councilmember Betty Olds asked that complaints made by Berkeley resident Charles Haltman regarding objectionable material shown on the publicly run station be discussed and dealt with as soon as possible.

Moore said he is protected by a 1996 U.S. Supreme Court rul-

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Programs' producer says he's being censored

BTV/From Page 1

ing that said public access programming is protected free speech and the safe harbor for adult material is between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Last January the board of directors of Berkeley Community Media voted to restrict "sexually explicit" shows to air between 2 and 4 a.m.

The restriction was ordered because of citizen complaints, Moore said.

He also said that the time slot restriction censors his right to free speech, by virtually eliminating his audience.

Berkeley Community Media Executive Director Brian Scott, said he was assigned the task of watching tapes of both shows to determine if they contained "obscene or sexually explicit material."

Scott said neither shows contained such material.

At Scott's recommendation the station later rescinded the time restrictions The decision to only show the programs between 2 and 4 a.m. was rescinded until the board could "inform itself of what the legal picture is," said board member Chuck Miller.

With the shows back on the air, complaints have begin to resurface.

"The first action was an effort to come up with a policy acceptable to both sides, and it turns it out it was not. The people who were offended by the content are still offended. The people who feel the show should be aired, still feel that way," Miller said.

Scott said the dilemma facing the channel is the same dilemma that always faces free speech.

"The danger is that somebody complains to the City Council and the program is censored. If you censor one show, you eliminate public access television," Scott said.

But the City Council is not obligated to fund BCM. And Scott fears they will vote to eliminate funding for the public access channel.

"Disgusting," Olds said. "It shouldn't be allowed to be put on so that someone could stumble on it, and I'm no prude. I would be willing to forego having that channel (25). What I saw that woman do (Susan Block) I don't think that was free speech.

"I don't think that's right and I know that the majority of the citizens feel the same way," Olds added.

Scott said public access is for the community from the community and should be regulated by the community.

If somebody wants to regulate programming they do so by contacting the District Attorney's office or the FCC, in writing, with the time, date, and content of the program. This could result in an investigation of the program. Then the courts would rule if something was obscene. The problem is that nobody wants to go on record for censorship.

'The danger is that somebody complains to the City Council and the program is censored. If you censor one show, you eliminate public access television.'

– Brian Scott
Berkeley Community Media
Executive Director

According to the FCC, "In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court established the following criteria to determine whether speech is obscene: (1) whether the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest; (2) whether the work depicts or describes in a patently offensive way sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable state law; and (3) whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. In 1978, the Court stated that whether the work could be deemed "patently offensive" would depend on context, degree and time of broadcast.

"In 1996, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that cable operators may decline to carry indecent programming on leased access channels, but cannot exercise the same control over programming on public access channels."

Miller said he doubts the Susan Block show would be found obscene by a court. He added that one parent reported that their teen-ager saw the show, which provoked a conversation between the parent and teen-ager that proved useful.

Contact reporter Guy Poole at guy@berkeleydailyplanet.net.

All regular shows are $5 (tickets on sale at 8pm, most shows at 8:30pm - see listings.)
There is an annual $3 membership required, which is available at the door.

Tuesday & Wednesday April 9/10 8:30pm
Canadian Premiere: Frank Moore's FEISTO
"Frank Moore sees more pussy than your average pet shop, has had Annie Sprinkle writhing across his lap, has survived the calamity and holocaust and gethsemani of life, yet smiles like a beautific child when cameras gun him down." - Robert L. Penick
Some of you may remember Frank Moore's work (and it is nothing if not memorable) from past screenings here of his first short FAIRY TALES CAN COME TRUE and excerpts from OUT OF ISOLATION. A highly regarded and somewhat baffling Berkeley performance artist, zine/book author, musician and filmmaker, Moore was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at birth - he has since taken this ailment and turned it on its head to create unforgettably strange, funny, awkward and frank films. While never comfortable and quite often challenging viewing, Moore's work manages to simultaneously laugh at and insight compassion for his struggles to find love, to have sex, to communicate... Frank's latest feature FEISTO casts himself as a strange and speechless alien discovered by a disillusioned Bay Area clothing designer. What Moore is most interested in though is exploring the "warm playing erotic small sexual messy fun turned-on reality between two people." Featuring unselfconsciously wooden improvisation, hackneyed dialogue and unlikely scenarios, Moore's film nevertheless manages to compel us with its unbridled erotic playfulness and home-movie humour. (video 104 mins 2002)

The Blinding Light!! is a 110 seat microcinema located in Vancouver, BC, (CANADA) specializing in alternative, underground and obscure film and video screenings.
We operate 6 nights a week (dark mondays)
and shows are usually at 8:30pm. Check out **current shows**, submission guidelines, the café, links, and the application form for the next Vancouver Underground Film Festival.
Feel free to e-mail us any time.

The Blinding Light!!
36 Powell Street, Vancouver, BC Canada V6A 1E7
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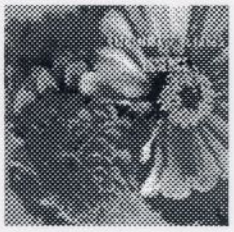
For contests and links, click on the images below



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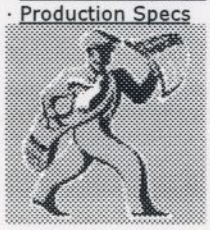

In the Straight This Week

April 4th - April 11th

Feisto
Starring Frank Moore and Tami Baron. Unrated.

Plays Tuesday and Wednesday, April 9 and 10, at the Blinding Light!!

By KEN EISNER

What would you do if, disaffected by your bossy, materialistic boyfriend, you went to the park and discovered an alien creature writhing in the leaves, naked but covered with what looked like chocolate syrup? If you were the woman in Feisto, an utterly inarticulate San Francisco clothing designer named Julie (Tami Baron), you'd lick off the goop and take him home with you. You'd also giggle a lot, look at the camera, and imagine the whole thing was being shot for America's Freakiest Home Videos.

That's par for this very unusual course, because the video's maker and star is Frank Moore, a Bay Area man who, born with cerebral palsy, uses modern technology to express himself through very rough-hewn art, music, and video. This allows him—like the kid with the watch in Clockstoppers—to hang out with some frisky chicks who might otherwise ignore him. In the case of the real-person pretty Baron, that means someone who's more comfortable taking off her clothes than mouthing even the most rudimentary improvised dialogue. What results is a sometimes startling, frequently funny, and occasionally just head-scratching look at the sexuality of someone society tends to think of as neutered.

Providing much unintentional humour is Dean R. Briggs as Julie's ex-boyfriend. After flipping out about her wheelchair-bound space man (whom she's dubbed Feisto because of his "feisty" nature), Chip first arranges to have him beaten up, then has an about-face, admitting to Julie's business partner—one of the film's many women who spout feminist verities but sit around listening raptly to men—that "through Feisto, she's found again her belief in what she's doing." What a guy.

City may regulate public TV

Berkeley Daily Planet
Friday, July 19, 2002

By Kurtis Alexander
Daily Planet Staff

Berkeley leaders are poised to move forward with what may be the most restrictive television-oversight policy in California next week.

The policy would require adult-oriented programming on the city's two public television stations, Channels 25 and 78, to air only after midnight.

In most cities in the nation the time for showing adult material comes two hours earlier and is voluntary, according to guidelines set by the Federal Communications Commission.

Special to the Daily Plane

The Freedom to be Human Ball is one of the controversial shows to have aired on public access tv, and could be restricted to early morning hours under a proposal in front of City Council.

SHOW/From Page 1

The Berkeley plan would establish a committee to provide "oversight and ultimate authority" and ensure that no producer skirts the new rule.

The proposal was first put forth in May, following a small uproar over the "Dr. Susan Block Show," which airs at 10:30 p.m. Fridays, featuring a lingerie-clad sex therapist who has encouraged women to masturbate and explore sensual touching on air.

On May 14, City Council directed that restrictions for such shows be packaged as a formal ordinance. This Tuesday, council members will vote on whether to adopt the new ordinance. The measure requires a second reading and a second vote of support before it is enacted.

Seven of the city's nine council members have already thrown support behind the ordinance. During May deliberations, Councilmember Kriss Worthington was the only vote against creation of the ordinance, and Councilmember Dona Spring abstained.

"Some people are outraged that when they turn on their public station at 10 o'clock there is something indecent on," said Councilmember Miriam Hawley. Hawley, along with council members Polly Armstrong and Betty Olds, is sponsoring the proposal.

A primary goal of the proposal is to protect children from seeing sexually explicit programs.

While most agree with the need for child oversight, some say it's not the city's job.

"As far as I see it, the BCM [Berkeley Community Media] stations are the only television stations that are even remotely uncensored," said Berkeley resident Marty Kent. "It'd be a shame to see City Council censor the last remaining channels."

Kent is joined by a number of First Amendment rights activists. Citing Supreme Court findings, the activists note that public access television stations cannot censor so-called "indecent" programming and are required to air all locally submitted and sponsored materials. The only exception, they say, is "obscene" material which legal experts agree is nearly impossible to classify.

Most television stations voluntarily adhere to a 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. window for airing "indecent" programming, called a "safe harbor."

Embracing the First Amendment argument is Berkeley attorney James Chanin. Chanin, a civil rights advocate, joined the ACLU in successfully suing the city in 1992 over a controversial panhandling ordinance. Chanin says the city is inviting similar lawsuits if it adopts the television restrictions before them now.

"There is no legitimate reason why the city of Berkeley should adopt this unprecedented attempt to regulate the free speech rights of its citizens," Chanin said in a written statement to council. "By doing so, the city will be restricting the rights of its adult citizens to produce and access legal material."

City Attorney Manuela Albuquerque disagreed.

"The city may, consistent with the First Amendment, impose time-segregation rules for indecent programming on BTV for the purposes of protecting children from lewd programming," Albuquerque said in a written statement to council members.

Brian Scott, Berkeley Community Media's executive director, says that the television station cannot afford to take on the legal risk of time-segregation rules, but it respects the city's efforts.

If the ordinance passes, a city-sponsored commission will address viewer complaints and direct BCM on how to take action, Scott speculated.

Opposition to the city's ordinance had been organized and at least one protest had been scheduled – until last week.

A planned anti-censorship demonstration for Berkeley's Ashkenaz theater was canceled when theater officials found out that there was going to be nudity during one of the performances, according to Frank Moore, a local television producer.

"They didn't seem to get the irony," Moore said.

Ashkenaz staff could not be reached for comment.

Berkeley Daily Planet
Volume 4, Issue 119
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ACLU confronts Berkeley

Civil rights group says proposed TV restrictions are unconstitutional

MATTHEW ARTZ
DAILY PLANET STAFF

Fans of adult-oriented public access television may not have to adjust their bed times after all.

A City Council proposal that would permit sexually-explicit programming on the city's two community TV stations to air only after midnight is unconstitutional and must be dropped, said the American Civil Liberties Union in a letter to the city last week.

Adult programming is permitted to air between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. as is recommended by the Federal Communications Commission and followed by nearly every public access station in the country.

Berkeley's proposal, which would move shows later and provide screening of programming, violates the First Amendment, wrote ACLU attorney Ann Brick.

SEE TV/PAGE 5

TV/FROM PAGE 1

In trying to protect children, the law would deny adults access to constitutionally protected programs, she said.

Instead of moving the shows to a later time, Brink wrote, Berkeley should encourage parents to request that cable operators block the stations or provide parents with a device that allows them to block offensive shows.

Complaints from residents about some public access shows led council to vote 5-3 in support of stricter restrictions. The ordinance will go into effect after a second affirmative vote scheduled for Sept. 10.

The two shows most criticized are "Frank Moore's Unlimited Possibilities" and "The Dr. Susan Block Show." Susan Block is shown at 10:30 p.m. Fridays and features a lingerie-clad sex therapist whose guests have included women masturbating and provocatively touching one another.

The ordinance would direct the station's operator, Berkeley Community Media, to install a commission to judge the decency of programming when a viewer complains.

Shows deemed to provide no literary, artistic or political merit and that appeal only to sexual interest and offer offensive depictions of sex would be banned until midnight. Council must approve the framework devised by BCM for grading its programming before it can take effect.

Brink wrote that placing the burden on BCM to determine the value of its programs would put undue pressure on the media group to curtail artistic expression.

"This aspect of the ordinance is almost sure to chill First Amendment expression, thereby frustrating the very purposes for which BTV was established," she wrote.

Brian Scott, BCM Media Director, said he would be uncomfortable as the final arbiter of "indecency."

"As soon as we make that decision we lose the trust of the community and people call us censors," he said, adding that if the ordinance passed, he would ask City Council to form a commission to rule on complaints.

Scott said only two residents have complained to him, but Councilmember Betty Olds defended the ordinance, saying that she had received eight to 10 complaints in the past six months about the Susan Block show.

"When they bring a camera close to a women's crotch and try to insert a disabled man's penis into a vagina – if you don't call that bad taste, I don't know what is," she said. "[The ordinance] isn't just [to protect] children. Other people want to view public television and they don't want to see it there."

But Councilmember Kriss Worthington, who opposes the ordinance, said that if Berkeley implements the most restrictive censorship policy in the state its passage would send a message to other cities to do the same. If council passes the ordinance, the sexually explicit shows could remain on air until council approves a committee to judge the programming.

But an attempt to move the shows to after midnight only could embroil the city in a lawsuit.

Frank Moore, a performance artist who includes nudity in some of his shows said his show was not "indecent" and that if the committee found otherwise, he would sue the city.

The ACLU has sued the city previously. In the most recent instance, the organization was successful in making Berkeley repeal Measure O, a 1994 ballot initiative that prevented homeless from lying on sidewalks.

Contact reporter at matt@berkeleydailyplanet.net

STAFF/SOUMMYA DATTA

SEX THERAPIST DR. *Susan Block, Berkeley ACLU Co-President Dan Komarek, producer Frank Moore and his translator Linda Mac (left to right) strike a pose. They are at the heart of a controversial City Council bill.*

CITY MAY CENSOR RISQUE TV SHOWS

Programs Air on Public Access Channel

by ANGEL BREWER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Advocates of Berkeley's public access channel spoke out against members of the Berkeley City Council yesterday, for supporting a bill that advocates said would censor sexually explicit material on television.

At the center of the debate were two late-night shows, "The Dr. Susan Block Show" and "Unlimited Possibilities," which feature nudity, sexual language and occasional demonstrations of sexual acts. Both air on the city's public access channel BTV-25 before midnight three times a week.

Councilmember Betty Olds headed the opposition to the programs, calling them "obscene" and hoping to push the shows to the midnight time slot. Currently, the Federal Communications Commission allows adult programming on public access channels after 10 p.m.

"The things they're showing should only be seen on pornos when people know and expect what they're getting," Olds said.

But producers of the show, who admitted their shows were sexually explicit, accused Olds of trying to censor a valuable community resource.

"Sure, I'm offended by my show sometimes, but I want to honestly portray sex in all its glory, danger, fun and foolishness," said television sex therapist Susan Block, who hosts and produces what she calls a "sex education program." "Just as a cooking show takes place in a kitchen with an apron and chef's hat, I run my show in a bedroom with the tools of my trade."

Frank Moore produces "Unlimited Possibilities," which is described on

See BILL, *page 2*

Sexually Explicit Content Upsets Residents

BILL, *from front*

the show's Web site as "a variety show including live music, deep conversations, uncensored videos and surprises from the unknown."

According to regulations from the Federal Communications Commission, television shows can only be removed on grounds of being deemed "indecent" if they fall under a three-pronged definition—the average person must find that the material appeals to a prurient interest, material must offensively depict or describe sexual conduct as defined by law and the material as a whole must lack serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

"As far as I can tell, no one can tell me which program meets all three criteria of indecency," said Councilmember Kriss Worthington. "Who is going to be the person to decide what is indecent?"

Block said her show has a strong educational premise because it features a call-in segment for viewers to ask their own sexual health questions.

Councilmember Dona Spring agreed with Block, saying the city should not impose more regulations on the shows.

"In my opinion, there is an important educational proponent (in these shows)," Spring said. "I suppose the issue of sexuality isn't comfortable for some folks, but we can't violate their First Amendment right."

Olds said there have been numerous complaints from Berkeley residents about the sexually explicit nature of the shows and their pre-midnight time slot, but Block and Moore denied Olds' claim.

The Berkeley chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union supported the shows' producers, advocating BTV has a First Amendment right to continue to air the programs.

"While claiming they want to protect kids, they are denying adults the right to view these protected materials," said UC Berkeley junior Dan Komarek, who serves as Berkeley ACLU co-president. "It's not unreasonable for us to hope that parents can monitor their own children's viewing habits."

Councilmember Polly Armstrong said moving the shows to later times would not be censorship.

UC Berkeley Professor Mel Gordon of the Center for Theater Arts, who has been a guest on Block's show, said the complaints about the show signified its artistic value.

"The whole purpose of comedy and tragedy is to deal with taboos," he said.

The City Council plans to vote on the bill this month.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2002

THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN

THE LATEST NEWS

Blackface Flap
By PAUL SCHINDLER
A $10 drag show staged by a Mississippi performer led to the shuttering of a Chelsea nightclub September 13 as police scrambled to contain a crowd of about 50 demonstrators who turned out to protest what they have termed the "misogyny, racism, and classism" of the act created by a gay white man in blackface. A heated debate has opened over bigotry versus free speech. But one thing both camps agree on is that the incident also points up the ease with which free speech and public discourse can be shut down under the current quality of life climate enforced by police.

Joe Grabarz Leaving Pride Agenda
By PAUL SCHINDLER
Joe Grabarz, who joined the Empire State Pride Agenda in December of 2000, and has led the group as executive director since last December, announced his departure on September 19. Grabarz's resignation as executive director is immediate.

Window Financial Strains Pre-Dated *NY Blade* Purchase
By DUNCAN OSBORNE

CLICK HERE TO RETURN HOME
Gay City NEWS
Volume 1, Issue 17 20 - 26 Sep 2002

7 Days & 7 Nights

FRI.SEP.20

Rocking for the Rainforest
CBGB's is hosting a fantastic event tonight to raise money for the rainforest. You know, that rich and lovely, and very green mass of plants we used to care about before **Enron blew us** out of the water and distracted us from the earth's real problems. There are tons of bands and monologues including Red F and Angel 13. The night is hosted by Dana Krystal and Margo Lynch. $10 donation. CBGB, 315 Bowery at Bleecker. For more info visit cbgb.com.

Fiesty Feisto
As part of the NY International Independent Film and Video Festival (don't ask, just check out the film), is playing a feature length movie, *Fiesto*, by Frank Moore, the wild, crazy, talented, genius performance artist. On the surface, *Feisto* is your standard story of a clothes designer who finds a creature (guess who!) definitely not from HERE who totally turns her life upside down. But what it really explores is the **warm playing erotic small sexual messy fun turned-on reality** between two people...an ice cream cone melting through-out life! This film may not be for everyone. But if you think you like to live on the edge: give it a try. Village East Cinemas, 187 Second Avenue; 10:10 p.m. $10. For more information call 510.526.7858 or visit feisto.com

Comingling Comics
Supposedly this season gays are in short supply on network television. Well, so what? They are all over the frickin' place when it comes to comedy in Manhattan. Check out the line-up for tonight's Gay and Lesbian comedy fest at **Don't Tell Mama.** Alana

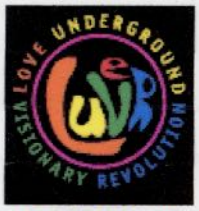
THE ARTS IN NYC

Begging for Attention
By MICHAEL RUCKER
"I love the fact that people wanna' talk about sex," says Maggie Gyllenhaal, the pixie-ish star of *Secretary*. "I mean, I wanna' talk about sex, too." Which is a good thing, since it's a subject on many people's minds ever since the film— in which she plays a masochistic typist in the service of a domineering lawyer James Spader— exploded onto screens at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival.

Ask, Tell, Laugh… Maybe?
By IAN HODDER
Humor is in the mind of the beholder. Take the Three Stooges. Reaction to the nyuk-sters ranges from gut- busting chuckles to trauma. Same with Jim Carrey, Jerry Lewis, and Monty Python. Now add the sci-fi spoof *Don't Ask Don't Tell.* Some folks have found this flick funny. I did not.

Cinemascope
Special events and recently noted films on the screens this week.

Moving Forward
By BRIAN McCORMICK
On a crisp, decidedly autumnal Thursday night directly following a day of great solemnity—9/11/02—



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LUVeR: Anti-Corporate, Anti-Capitalist Web Radio

Radical, Uncensored, and streaming 24/7

LUVeR stands for "Love Underground Visionary Revolution". It prides itself on being anti-corporate, anti-capitalist and probably a few more "anti" things as well. What it isn't against is provocative, fresh Web Radio. LUVeR and stations in the same spirit are what Webcasting is all about. Your Radio Guide talks with one of LUVeR's people, Frank Moore.

Corey: What makes is LUVeR unique in your opinion?

Frank Moore: Well...how many radical webstations are there that are totally non-commercial, completely uncensored, stream live 24/7, have a core rotation of over 15,000 songs [adding more every day!] of every kind of music, webcast a wide range of programs created by people around the world, cover news, do exposes, cover political and cultural events, have large on-demand audio and video libraries, a separate news site...all run by just people for almost 4 years? guess we have to define the word "unique".

Corey: LUVeR states it is "an anti-corporate, anti-capitalist revolution!". Can you talk more about that?

Frank Moore: Well, LUVeR is not about selling, making money, making it big. It is communication, spreading passions, inciting revolution. This is why we do LUVeR, pay for LUVeR, etc. This is what the internet is suited for. The corporate capitalists are freaking out because they finally have realized that the only way to make profits off the web is through monopolization. They also realized that they can not compete with us passion creative people making community together. So they are coming after us. But that's doomed to failure.

LUVeR challenges the audience. When we first started LUVeR, people freaked because we played all kinds of music together...Without the false marketing ploy of genres. I know when people freak, we are doing our job! So we have weened people over the years away from the limits of genres. They freak when we show human eroticism. They freak when we do news, politics...Anything other than straight music. But LUVeR is here, not to make money or create a mass listenership, but to challenge, to plow down limits...And that over time attracts an adventurous audience.

11/2/02

Corey: LUVeR's schedule is fairly varied. In traditional radio, that's called "block programming" where different types of shows take up "blocks" of time. Would you agree LUVeR programs that way or am I wrong?

Frank Moore: God no! Block programming fragments reality...And gets boring fast! Each person is god over her show's content...I never know what they will do. We schedule things purely on the practical level, not on content, not what will go with what! That would be safe...Boring!

Corey: Tell us about some of your favorite shows on LUVeR...

Frank Moore: Do i look that stupid? That would get me killed! Most of the shows i love. A few i don't like. You have to explore LUVeR yourself! But my live streaming video show, the shaman's den, is on sundays at 8pm pt...The ultimate variety show with live bands, interviews, etc. For 2 hours. And then, after the sexy susan block's video show, my playing with passion comes on where we play my videos of live performances...A lot of nudity! And that is just sunday night!

Corey: LUVeR says it's a "tribal" channel. Can you explain more about that?

Frank Moore Well, it's a big tribe who creates LUVeR, us here, the LUVeR crews who go out and tape events, the people who do their shows on LUVeR [anyone can do a LUVeR show], the d.I.Y. Bands who send us their music, the voices we webcast, and of course the listeners/viewers, etc., Etc....A tribe of thousands!

- Corey Deitz

http://radio.about.com/library/weekly/aa110202a.htm
11/02